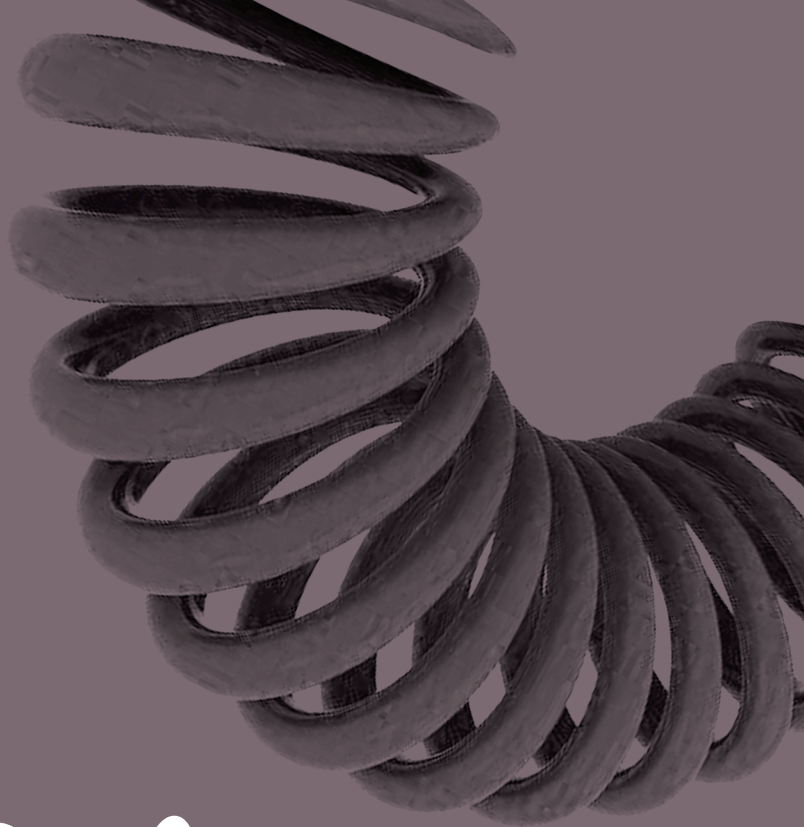




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Men Get Flexible!

Mainstreaming Flexible
Work in Australian Business

Creating quality flexible work and
careers as standard business practice
in Australian workplaces.

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Written by Dr Graeme Russell and Dr Jane O'Leary

Report embargoed until 9.30am AEST 28 August 2012



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CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	6
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	7
1. SETTING THE SCENE	11
1.1 Our Approach To Men and Flexibility	14
1.2 Our Definition Of Flexibility	15
1.3 Structure Of The Report	15
1.4 Our Evidence-Base	16
2. WHY MEN & FLEXIBILITY?	17
2.1 Facing A Demographic Reality	17
2.2 Improving Business Outcomes	19
2.3 Improving Individual, Relationship & Family Outcomes	21
2.4 Summing Up	25
3. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE-OF-PLAY?	27
3.1 Flexibility As An Employment Driver	27
3.2 Men's Utilisation Of Flexible Work	28
3.3 Summing Up	29
4. ENGAGING MEN AROUND FLEXIBILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION	30
4.1 Reframe Flexible Work	30
4.2 Focus On Diversity Amongst Men	31
4.3 Focus On Organisational & Team Culture	33
4.4 Focus On Leadership Commitment & Capability	35
4.5 Create A New Model Of Success	35
4.6 Focus On Leadership & Support Within Teams	36
4.7 Focus On Fatherhood As A Flexibility Enabler	36
4.8 Bringing It All Together: An Organisational Framework for Action	37
5. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE	39
MEN GET FLEXIBLE AT WESTPAC	41
REFERENCES	45



“ We are very pleased to be partnering with Diversity Council Australia. Flexibility at work has been a key area of focus for us and a source of competitive advantage.

This important companion report to DCA's '*Get Flexible*' research acknowledges the pivotal role men play in promoting flexibility in the workplace. It recognises that men and women have similar requirements when it comes to working flexibly.

At Westpac Group we know flexibility is a key ingredient for creating the agile and diverse workplace needed to both serve our customers and ensure the wellbeing of our employees.

Flexibility of work schedule, workplace and work design will be critical success factors for the future of Australian workplaces. Dynamic organisations will be the leaders of this change. ”

GAIL KELLY,
MANAGING DIRECTOR
AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



“ One of the top reasons that employees work at Stockland is the ability to uphold personal responsibilities, whilst continuing to develop a successful career with us. We know that offering a flexible working environment is central to this, and it helps us to attract and retain the best talent. With our ongoing commitment to diversity, flexibility and Equal Employment Opportunity, we are proud to be involved in this forward-thinking project. ”

MICHAEL ROSMARIN,
GROUP EXECUTIVE STRATEGY AND HR



“ At Origin, we recognise that flexibility can mean a range of arrangements for men and women and employees at different stages of their careers. Reports such as Diversity Council Australia’s *Men Get Flexible! Mainstreaming Flexible Work in Australian Business* play a crucial role in broadening the flexible work discussion and helping companies develop inclusive and effective policies. ”

GRANT KING,
MANAGING DIRECTOR

Allens > < Linklaters

“ At Allens our aim is to create a flexible working environment that supports all employees to achieve both career and personal goals. Diversity Council Australia’s ‘*Men Get Flexible*’ research, broadens the flexibility discussion to review the needs of men. ”

MICHAEL ROSE,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE PARTNER

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



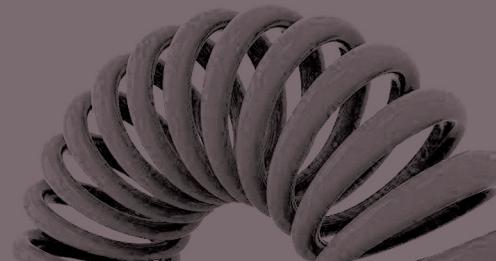
This project was conceived by DCA Chief Executive Officer, Nareen Young and developed in consultation with Dr Graeme Russell, formerly a Board Member DCA, DCA Research Director, Dr Jane O'Leary, DCA staff and (then) Westpac Manager, Head of Diversity and Flexibility, Rachel Slade.

The project benefited significantly from the intellectual and practitioner insights of the diversity executives in the corporate sponsors, including: Jane Counsel, Head of Diversity and Flexibility, and Belinda Abbott, Manager Diversity and Flexibility, Westpac; Trevor Childs, (then) General Manager Employee Relations, and Julie Tanner, Senior Manager, Organisational Development & Diversity, Stockland; Catherine McNair, (then) National Manager Diversity and Inclusion and Catherine Bolch, Head of Diversity and Engagement, Origin; and Dr Jacqui Abbott, Head of Flexibility and Diversity, Allens.

DCA would like to thank the Westpac Group, Stockland, Origin and Allens, the key sponsors of this project. Without their support, this project would not have been realised.

Their partnership in this project clearly demonstrates their leadership and commitment to mainstreaming flexibility in Australian workplaces.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Men Get Flexible! Mainstreaming Flexible Work in Australian Business is a partnership research initiative between Diversity Council Australia (DCA) and its members, the Westpac Group, Stockland, Origin Energy and Allens.

DCA has released this report as a companion to its *Get Flexible!* report, which outlined how Australian organisations can ‘get flexible’ and mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their own workplaces. That report identified 11 critical strategies for moving flexible work and careers from the margins to the mainstream, and demonstrated that when organisations embark on such a journey they position themselves to be sustainable and adaptable to change, facilitate gender equality, attract and retain talent and improve workplace productivity.

This follow-on report, *Men Get Flexible!*, provides a framework for action for organisations seeking to mainstream flexibility through focusing on the issue of ‘men and flexibility.’ It recognises ‘men and flexibility’ constitutes an important enabler of mainstreaming flexibility in Australian business, through its capacity to assist organisations:

- Promote flexible work and careers as legitimate for and available to all, rather than merely the domain of mothers with young children, working at lower levels and in lower paid roles;
- Encourage leaders, who are disproportionately men, to lead ‘the charge’ in making flexible work and careers standard business practice; and
- Make and communicate a broader business case for mainstreaming flexibility, which sees the connection between flexibility for men and organisational productivity and sustainability.

A supplementary driver for this report has been the recent heightened global interest in men’s role in leading organisational change around (gender) diversity, gender equality and flexibility. If men are to be charged with changing the world when it comes to diversity, gender equality and flexibility it is important that considered attention be brought to what this means in principle and practice for organisations. We believe this report contributes to this objective.

With the above in mind, DCA and project sponsors felt it critical to investigate and report on how Australian organisations can mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their own workplaces through focusing on men and flexibility.

Our approach

Our approach in this report was to investigate and report on the following three key questions:

- *Why flexibility for men?* What is the evidence base for a focus on men and flexibility?
- *What is the current situation?* Do men value flexible work? To what extent do men utilise flexible work and in what forms?
- *What needs to change?* How can we increase men’s engagement in flexible work and thus help to move flexible work from the margins to the mainstream?

To respond to these key questions, we drew on three primary sources of evidence, these being: (i) academic and industry research on men and flexibility; (ii) previously unreported findings from DCA’s (2012) *Get Flexible!* project; and (iii) previously unreported findings from DCA’s (2010) *Working for the Future* project.

Why men & flexibility?

Significant societal changes have occurred in men's work and family/personal experiences over the past 30 to 40 years, triggering amongst men a growing interest in, and need to, access quality flexible work. Such changes include:

- Increasing number of dual-earner families;
- Intensified fathering and family expectations;
- Increasing number of men transitioning to retirement; and
- An increasing proportion of men from all demographics not identifying as the 'ideal worker' (i.e. a full-time, fully committed employee without personal or family commitments that impact on their availability to work).

Our review of available research clearly demonstrates the return on investment that can be generated when organisations consider flexibility as it relates to men. We encourage organisations to take a broader social perspective than that customarily taken and recognise three major reasons why a focus on men and flexibility is critical:

1. *To directly sustain or improve business outcomes*, including in relation to recruiting from a broader talent pool of men, increasing performance and productivity and reducing turnover of male employees.
2. *To sustain or improve individual, relationship and family outcomes*, including in relation to reducing men's stress and burnout, enhancing family relationships and enabling active fathering which, in turn, enhances men and women's psychological well-being and gender equality both in domestic work and paid employment.
3. *To sustain or improve community well-being*.

What is the current state-of-play?

DCA and other research shows that:

- A significant number of men desire greater access to flexible work than they currently experience and this is especially the case for young fathers.
- More men are interested in flextime, compressed work-weeks and working from home than in part-time work.
- More men tend to 'tinker' with flexible work (i.e. rely more on informal flextime and *ad hoc* working from home structured around full-time work). Very few currently work part-time (and very few desire this as an option), and very few take extended leave at the time of a child's birth or adoption.

Engaging men around flexibility: An organisational framework for action

Our review of research revealed that a significant number of men want flexible work but their uptake is moderate only, and most commonly involves 'tinkering' with flexibility. Recognising that organisations and men and their families can benefit from men's higher utilisation of flexible work, we drew on key lessons learned from DCA and other research to develop a framework for action for organisations seeking to mainstream flexibility through focusing on men and flexibility. What should be evident from this framework is that engaging men around flexibility is not necessarily about designing and implementing discrete programs or initiatives for men at work.

While such initiatives certainly have a place, engaging men is about broadening the approach and integrating a focus on men and flexibility across existing initiatives and strategies relating to flexibility and cultural change, leadership commitment and capability development, high performing teams and career development.

Our framework for action is represented in a diagram (see Figure 4 on page 38) and encourages organisations to take action in the following seven key areas:

1. *Flexibility reframed*: Emphasise the business case for men to engage in flexible work and broaden the definition of flexibility to include full-time work self-managed flexibly, and formal, informal and dynamic flexible work.
2. *Diversity amongst men*: Structure work in multiple ways to respond to the diversity amongst men in terms of age, cultural background, life-stage, nature of work, sexual orientation, work-life priorities and so on.
3. *Culture*: Foster an organisational culture that is supportive of flexible work for men, pro-actively encouraging men to engage in flexible work and providing opportunities for men to share their experiences of flexible work.
4. *Leadership*: Develop and publicise senior male role models of flexible work to break the perception that senior roles = no flexibility.
5. *New model of success*: Address men's reluctance to use flexible work for fear of career penalties by designing new roles with flexibility as standard, integrating flexibility into senior roles and illustrating 'success stories'.
6. *Team-focus*: Recognise that success in integrating flexible work hinges on the relationship between individuals and their teams, and build flexibility into standard team-based operating procedures.
7. *Fatherhood*: Utilise fatherhood as an effective entry to integrate flexibility and reduce gender differences in accessing flexible work, and focus on a long-term approach beyond parental leave.

Recommendations

For organisations

1. Articulate a business case for engaging men around flexibility in your organisation.
2. Get clear on what it would look and feel like if men in your organisation were engaged in flexible work and flexible careers.
3. Use the seven components of the 'Men Get Flexible' framework to engage men in the mainstreaming flexibility journey.
4. Take a first step by engaging senior leadership teams in an enquiry process similar to that used in this project.
 - *Why flexibility for men?* What is our business case for a focus on men and flexibility?
 - *What is the current situation?* Do men value flexible work in our organisation? To what extent do they utilise it and in what forms? What is the diversity amongst men in terms of valuing and utilising flexible work?
 - *What needs to change?* How can we increase men's engagement in flexible work and thus move flexible work from the margins to the mainstream?

5. Consider men's experiences of both accessing flexible work and careers AND leading organisational approaches to mainstreaming flexible work. While many men may be interested in accessing flexible work, not all will necessarily be in a leadership position that enables them to lead the 'flexibility charge.'
6. Develop a set of process and outcome indicators for, and measures, of men's effective engagement in flexible work and flexible careers.
7. Focus on men and flexibility as part of your organisation's strategy to mainstream flexibility, but be cautious about treating this as the silver bullet for delivering on your flexibility, diversity and gender equality objectives.
8. Take a bigger picture approach to the issue of men and flexibility, and consider the contribution men and fathers make to individual, family and social well-being. There is an abundance of research demonstrating the positive impact engaged fathering has on men themselves, women and children, and organisations can play a key role (in addition to government, community and families themselves) in facilitating this through making flexible work and careers standard business practice.
9. Recognise that gender equality at work depends in part on gender equality at home. Consider how your organisation's communication strategies around flexibility can validate men increasing their overall engagement in caregiving and household work. Facilitating the more equitable and less gendered division of labour at home can have positive flow on consequences for your organisation, as women are freed up to increase their participation in and engagement with the workplace.

Change the business and community debate

1. Design a business and community awareness campaign to:
 - Reframe the debate about flexible work and flexible careers so that it focuses on *mutually beneficial* flexibility for employers and employees. This should engage directly with the evidence that links mainstreamed flexibility and: (i) business performance, productivity and sustainability, and (ii) workforce well-being and sustainability (see DCA's *Get Flexible!* report).
 - Focus on the community benefits of flexibility in terms of personal and family well-being, as well as the community risks and costs associated with not mainstreaming flexibility.
 - Use the framework for organisational action to identify organisations that are effectively engaging men in their mainstreaming flexibility journey, and publicise these.
 - Challenge gender-based societal and organisational expectations and norms about care-giving, household responsibilities and domestic organisation, with a view to encouraging men to increase their overall engagement in these areas and thus address the persistent gendered division of labour in Australian families. This is not solely the responsibility of workplaces and requires a shift in thinking across the community more broadly.
2. Actively engage in debates with employer organisations, unions and governments to show how flexible work based on mutuality and made available to both men and women can and will contribute to increased productivity and to the success of the Australian economy.

1 SETTING THE SCENE:



DCA's **Men Get Flexible!** report provides a framework for action for organisations seeking to mainstream flexibility through focusing on the issue of 'men and flexibility.'

The report is a companion to DCA's *Get Flexible!* report, which outlined how Australian organisations can 'get flexible' and mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their own workplaces. *Get Flexible!* identified 11 critical strategies for moving flexible work and careers from the margins to the mainstream (see Figure 1 on pages 12 and 13), and demonstrated that when organisations embark on such a journey they position themselves to be sustainable and adaptable to change, facilitate gender equality, attract and retain talent and improve workplace productivity.

DCA released *Men Get Flexible!* in recognition that 'men and flexibility' constitutes an important enabler of mainstreaming flexibility in Australian business, through its capacity to assist organisations 'Get universal', 'Get leading' and 'Get ROI' when it comes to flexibility.

Getting Universal: An essential element of mainstreaming flexibility is considering how to enable men to access flexible work in all its forms and at all organisational levels, as in order to make flexible work standard business practice, organisations need to ensure that flexible work and careers are viewed as legitimate for and available to all, rather than merely the domain of mothers with young children, working at lower levels and in lower paid roles.

Getting Leading: An additional essential element of mainstreaming flexibility is leading 'the charge' around flexible work and careers and, as leadership roles are disproportionately held by men, organisations need to ensure that men are engaged in leading organisational approaches to mainstreaming flexibility.

Getting ROI: A final essential element of mainstreaming flexibility is making and communicating the connection between flexibility for men and organisational productivity and sustainability. Australian organisations have historically viewed flexible work as relevant primarily to mothers of young children (DCA, 2012), and so the business case for making flexible work available to men has been inadequately elucidated. Yet, as the following section makes clear, there is an abundance of research demonstrating the return on investment for considering flexibility as it relates to men.

A supplementary driver for this report has been the recent heightened global interest in men's role in leading organisational change around (gender) diversity, gender equality and flexibility. This is evident in the Male Champions of Change initiative, launched by the Federal Sex Discrimination Commissioner Elizabeth Broderick, the new Workplace Gender Equality Act with its emphasis on gender equality in caregiving and men's contribution, the Men Advocating Change (MARC) initiative of Catalyst, as well as numerous recent publications here and abroad (e.g. Aumann, Galinsky, & Matos, 2011; Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, Sparrow & Swan, 2011; Harrington, Van Deusen & Humbert, 2011; Harrington, Van Deusen & Ladge, 2010; Linkow, Civian & Lingle, 2011; Page & Feenstra, 2011). If men are to be charged with 'changing the world' when it comes to diversity, gender equality and flexibility it is important that considered attention be brought to what this means in principle and practice for organisations. We believe this report contributes to this objective.

With the above in mind, DCA and project sponsors felt it critical to investigate and report on how Australian organisations can mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their own workplaces through focusing on 'men and flexibility'.

Figure 1: DCA's *Get Flexible!* Framework For Action For Mainstreaming Flexibility



Figure 1: DCA's *Get Flexible!* Framework For Action For Mainstreaming Flexibility



1.1 Our Approach To Men and Flexibility

In developing a framework for organisational action, we recognised the importance of being clear about how the issue of ‘men and flexibility’ is most usefully approached. Specifically, we suggest consideration be given to the following factors.

Be Wary Of Silver Bullet Assumptions. While we encourage organisations to consider how focusing on men and flexibility can help mainstream flexibility in their workplaces, we caution them about treating this as the silver bullet for delivering on their diversity, flexibility and gender equality objectives. While certainly an important element, men’s role is not ‘the be all and end all’ it is often portrayed to be. Indeed, this point was picked up by Helen Conway, Director of the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency in her recent Laffer Memorial Lecture. She applauded the corporate leaders participating in the Male Champions of Change initiative but noted that even here, though the male CEOs were some of the strongest supporters of women in the workplace and had been committed to the cause over a long period of time, they assessed their own organisations “as far from the end [desired] state” or having “captured the diversity advantage” (Conway, 2012, pp. 10–11).

Recognise Diversity Amongst Men. Organisations need to recognise the diversity within men in terms of the nature of work, life-stage and lifestyle (e.g. both older and younger men seeking flexible work for lifestyle reasons), cultural background, sexual orientation and so on. Men are not a homogeneous group and understanding this diversity is critical to responding to their workplace needs (Allard, Haas & Hwang, 2011), as well as engaging them in the flexibility journey. In this report we draw on an extensive research literature with a particular focus on findings from a national representative sample of employed men, men who are in management positions, young fathers, young men with no care-giving responsibilities and men who are nearing retirement. The focus on young fathers is particularly relevant given:

- Its relevance for a majority of men – around 80% of men will become fathers during their lifetime (Gray, 2002), and most men (and women) will have children in their early 30s when they are also in the key years of their experience of paid employment;¹
- The extensive on-going and especially recent academic research on this group;
- The critical nature of flexible work for this demographic group for achieving gender equality; and
- The recognition that the transition to fatherhood presents a key opportunity for organisations to engage men in accessing flexible work.

Address Access & Leading Change. Organisations need to consider both men’s experiences of *accessing* flexible work AND of *leading* organisational approaches to mainstreaming flexible work. While many men may be interested in accessing flexible work, not all will necessarily be in a leadership position that enables them to lead the ‘flexibility charge.’

Aspire To A Higher Standard. We encourage organisations to take a bigger picture approach to the issue of men and flexibility, and consider the contribution men make to individual, family and social well-being. Men need access to flexibility to support their important roles as fathers, carers and engaged volunteers in their communities. There is an abundance of research demonstrating the positive impact engaged fathering has on men, women and children (Flouri, 2005; Lamb, 2010; Pleck, 2010) and organisations can play a key role (in addition to government, community and families themselves) in facilitating this through making flexible work and careers standard business practice.

¹ Drawing on Negotiating the Life Course survey data, Gray (2002) estimates that at age 50 almost 20% of men remain childless (compared to 13% for women) – the view being that fatherhood declines so markedly after 50 it makes no appreciable difference to the figures.

Promote Gender Equality At Work & At Home. Providing men with access to flexibility allows them to increase their engagement in caregiving and household work. In turn, this can help facilitate gender equality at work - when couples share caring and domestic responsibilities more equitably, women, who have traditionally undertaken the majority of these responsibilities, are better positioned to access quality employment opportunities.

1.2 Our Definition Of Flexibility

It is important at the outset to make clear what we mean by flexible work and careers. Our framework covers work, jobs and careers that are designed and structured with the following flexibility characteristics built in, rather than bolted on (framework adapted from Families & Work Institute):

- *Flexibility in Time:* Options to vary start and end times, compressed work weeks.
- *Flexibility in Place:* Telecommuting and working from home.
- *Choice in Managing the Timing of Work:* Whether and to what degree employees have choice about when they work – from scheduling hours and overtime to deciding when to take breaks – and about how their time at work is spent. This also includes time in lieu policies.
- *Reduced Time:* Options such as working hours that are less than full-time, part-time (including job share) or part-year work.
- *Caregiving Leave:* Parental leave (for birth or adoption) and caregiving for family members with an illness or disability.
- *General Leave:* Policies and practices that apply for taking sick days and planned extended leave.
- *Unplanned Leave:* Informal access to leave for unanticipated or unplanned events.
- *Flexible Careers:* Employees are able to enter, exit and re-enter the workforce, or to increase or decrease their workload or career pace at different life stages.

Our framework also addresses the need to achieve a balance between employer and employee needs for flexibility. These are often viewed as two competing 'either/or' perspectives. Yet a balance between employer and employee flexibility is achievable, and can yield significant positive outcomes for both employers and employees.

1.3 Structure Of The Report

The report has three substantive sections:

- *Why flexibility for men?* What is the evidence base for a focus on men and flexibility?
- *What is the current situation?* Do men value flexible work? To what extent do men utilise flexible work and in what forms?
- *What needs to change?* How can we increase men's engagement in flexible work and thus help to move flexible work from the margins to the mainstream?

1.4 Our Evidence-Base

In the course of responding to each of these key questions and thus developing our framework for organisational action, we have drawn on three primary sources of evidence:

1. Academic and industry research on men and flexibility.

2. Previously unreported findings from DCA's (2012) *Get Flexible!* project.

- This project involved drawing on the views and experiences of a range of people who had been immersed in flexible work in Australia – academic researchers, business leaders, union leaders, people who work flexibly and those who manage or work with them – to provide an organisational action framework for moving flexible work from the margins to the mainstream. In all, 57 participants were involved: 53 participated in group-based 'think tanks' while four individual interviews were held with experts who were unable to attend the think tanks. The enquiry process involved the following questions: What does flexibility mean to you? To what extent do you think flexibility is mainstreamed (i.e. flexibility is standard business practice) in your organisation? What does 'Flexibility as standard business practice' mean to you? Should flexibility be standard business practice? If yes, why? What are the major arguments for doing this? What are the benefits? What would it look like in your organisation if flexibility was standard business practice? What needs to change for flexibility to be standard business practice? The think tank groups included academic and industry experts, flexible workers (men and women) and managers/colleagues of flexible workers (men and women).

3. Findings from DCA's *Working for the Future* research project (DCA, 2010).

- This was an online survey of a nationally representative sample of employed persons conducted in 2010. In all, 1,037 men completed this survey: 57% were parents and 31% had some responsibility for providing care or support for an older relative; 76% lived with a spouse/partner; 65% were employed in the private sector and 23% were employed in Government/Public Service; 78% were employed full-time, 16% part-time and 4% on a casual basis; and 21% were in the top job category of Managers or Administrators.
- The specific focus here was on the 1,037 male participants. For the purpose of this analysis, five groups have been identified: (i) the entire group of men included in the sample; (ii) young fathers, defined as being a parent and under 35 years of age (n = 68); (iii) managers/administrators (n = 214); (iv) men under 35 years with no care-giving responsibilities (n = 105); and (v) men approaching retirement, aged 55+ years (n = 451). It is the intention to conduct additional analyses with different groups to investigate the diversity within the group of men (e.g. men in male dominated industries; men who work shift work).

2 WHY MEN & FLEXIBILITY?



Our intention in this chapter is to make a compelling call to action for organisations to build the topic of ‘men and flexibility’ into their efforts to mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their own workplaces.

First, we summarise the demographic reality of working men, outlining the significant changes that have occurred in men’s work and personal lives over recent decades, which mean that a majority of men would be looking for greater flexibility in careers and work to respond to these responsibilities.

Next, we roll out the business case, taking a broader social perspective than that customarily taken. From this perspective, there are three major reasons why a focus on men and flexibility is critical: (i) to directly sustain or improve business outcomes; (ii) to sustain or improve individual, relationship and family outcomes; and (iii) to sustain or improve community well-being. Improving both (ii) and (iii) will have an indirect impact on business outcomes. The emphasis here is on the first two of these propositions.

2.1 Facing A Demographic Reality

Significant changes have occurred in men’s work and family/personal experiences over the past 30 to 40 years. This period has been characterised by increasing number of dual-earner families, intensified fathering and family expectations, an increasing proportion of men not identifying as the ‘ideal worker’ (i.e. a full-time, fully committed employee without personal or family commitments that impede their availability to work, in terms of time, place, energy and mind) and, associated with this, diversification in identities, priorities and aspirations of men in relation to work and family/personal life. There is a view that workplaces have not kept up with these changes, and as a consequence have been unresponsive to men’s and fathers’ needs.

Dual-Earner Families. Looking at the evidence in terms of the workforce demographics, there are a significant number of men:

- Who are partnered with women who are also employed – in the DCA (2010) project 46% of the sample was of this particular demographic. This Figure is broadly consistent with Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) findings, which indicate that 55% of all couple families have both partners employed (this includes both couples with dependent children and couples with no dependent children) (ABS, 2011b);
- With employed partners and have caregiving responsibilities – in the DCA (2010) study 64% of fathers had a partner in the paid workforce, and 31% had elder care responsibilities. Again, these findings are consistent with the national and international trend – in Australia, 63% of two parent families with dependent children have both parents employed (ABS, 2011b), while this Figure has been put at close to 60% in the U.S. (Catalyst, 2012); and
- Who are single/divorced/separated with caring responsibilities – with varying patterns of access and responsibility. In the DCA (2010) study, 11% of working fathers were either divorced or separated.

Given these statistics, the expectation then is that a majority of men in the paid workforce would be experiencing the dual pressures of work and caregiving, and would be looking for greater flexibility in careers and work to respond to these responsibilities. This is particularly so given recent U.S.

research (Galinsky, Aumann & Bond, 2008) has found that the level of work-life conflict fathers in dual-earner couples experience has increased over the past 30 years and is now higher than that experienced by mothers in the same family situations. Other researchers have generated comparable findings, including Nomaguchi (2009), who demonstrated that fathers in dual-earner marriages have experienced the largest increase in work-family conflict over the past several decades.

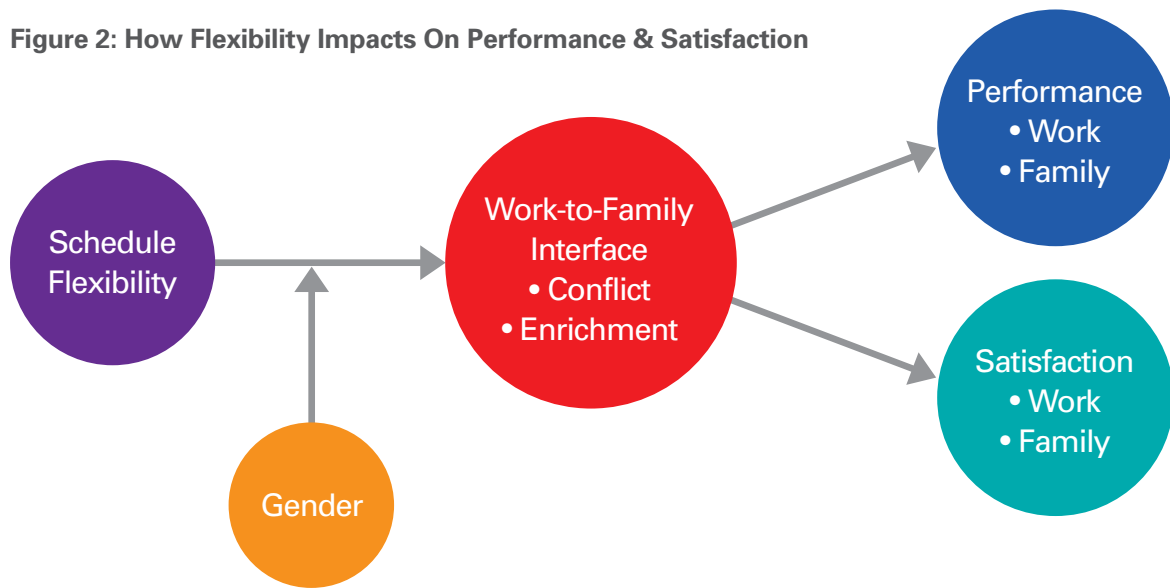
Intensified Family Expectations. There are also continuing heightened expectations that fathers be active in caregiving and parenting, both from fathers themselves, women and the community (Baxter & Smart, 2010; Baxter & Smart, 2011; Page & Feenstra, 2011; Russell, 1983; Russell, Barclay, Edgecombe, Donovan, Habib, Callaghan & Pawson, 1999). In the Australian context, there is a clear desire emerging from men to be more engaged with their families. Almost two-thirds of fathers interviewed as part of the Longitudinal Study of Australian Children agreed or strongly agreed that, because of work responsibilities, they had missed out on home or family activities that they would have liked to have taken part in (Baxter & Smart, 2011).

Diversification In Men's Needs & Aspirations. There is a high level of diversity in the identities, priorities and aspirations of men in relation to work and family/personal life. This is borne out by a recent Harvard University study of 60 men employed in a prestigious consulting firm (Reid, 2011). Reid found that men are adopting a range of professional identities when it came to work-life fit including the traditional 'ideal worker' (40% of the men defined themselves this way) professional identity but also extending beyond this. Specifically, a second group of men had turned their back on this identity and were instead looking to change careers to align their lives with their values, while a third group adopted a different professional identity and work-life fit strategy altogether. While these men were successful in terms of performance evaluations and compensation, they actually worked fewer hours and were unavailable for the office after hours. These men subtly and skilfully chose the projects and clients that would allow more flexibility – and surrounded themselves with like-minded spirits who would cover for one another. They had learned along the way that their careers benefitted from being discreet about their strategy. Interestingly, men defined by Reid as "unavailable ideals" (30% of the sample), who shared a high commitment to work, but bounded their availability to work (e.g. by being home at night to have family meals, not working on weekends), were in fact the highest performers (based in independently obtained performance evaluation data).

Generational Diversity Amongst Men. DCA research shows that the diversification in men's employment needs and aspirations is evident not just amongst young fathers with caring responsibilities, as is often assumed, but also amongst young men with no care-giving responsibilities and men approaching retirement. DCA's *Working for the Future* survey findings (reported later in greater detail) revealed that access to flexibility is a key employment driver for both these age groups. Moreover, DCA *Grey Matters* research (2007) involving 439 men 45 years and older, found that 91% considered "having a job that suits my needs in relation to hours of work and flexibility" as important in influencing their decision to continue employment beyond 'retirement'. These findings are supported by Australian Bureau of Statistics findings. Close to a million full time working men intend to change their working arrangements leading up to retirement (ABS, 2011c). Of these 42% wanted to work part time. Of the remaining men who intended to continue in full time work, 21% wanted to reduce their duties, responsibility or intensity at work, 6% intended to work more hours from home and 3.5% planned to work on a contract basis.

Researchers contend that workplaces have not kept up with these changes, and as a consequence have been unresponsive to men's and fathers' needs. This, despite there being a plethora of evidence that providing men with access to flexibility can yield significant benefits to organisations, as well as to individuals and families. The manner in which flexible work can generate positive outcomes for individuals, families and organisations is represented in Figure 2 overleaf.

Figure 2: How Flexibility Impacts On Performance & Satisfaction



Adapted from Carlson, Grzywacz & Kacmar (2010)

2.2 Improving Business Outcomes

Recruit From A Broader Talent Pool of Men. DCA research (2010) shows that flexibility is one of the top five employment drivers for each of five groups of male workers – men overall, young fathers, male managers, men under 35 without caring responsibilities and men who are over 55 years of age. In the survey, participants were asked how important each of ten job characteristics would be to them if they were looking for a new job. The top five (rated as being extremely important) are presented in Table 1 below for each of the five groups. Items not included in this priority list included: “Doing work that challenges me to learn new things”; “Working for an organisation that I am proud to work for.” As can be seen from the Table below, “having the flexibility I need to manage my family/personal life” was in the top five for all groups. For young fathers, this was even more critical, being the third most highly valued job characteristic. It is also worth noting that both pay and job security were rated very highly for the young fathers.

Table 1: Importance Of Flexibility For Working Men (DCA <i>Working for the Future</i> Data)					
QU: If you were looking for a new job, how important would the following job characteristics be?	% Stated 'Extremely Important'				
	All Men	Young Fathers	Managers	Under 35	Over 55
Being well paid for my skills and effort on the job	50	73	54	73	37
Having a manager/supervisor who recognises me for doing a good job	47	52	51	56	43
Having a secure job that I don't have to worry about losing	46	65	49	59	36
Having work that is meaningful to me	42	41	51	51	40
Having the flexibility I need to manage my family/personal life	39	59	48	45	31

Increase Employee Engagement & Discretionary Effort. As has been pointed out by Hill (included in Russell & Hill, 2008), it has long been known that when employees do not have flexibility and as a result, find it more difficult to simultaneously manage the demands of their work and personal/family lives, there are many negative consequences for the organisation and for the person. Job satisfaction decreases, turnover intentions increase and job engagement declines. Employees are less likely to contribute their discretionary effort to achieve business objectives. The entire business suffers. Likewise a lack of flexibility results in increased personal stress and burnout, depression is more likely, couple relationships are strained, parenting suffers and the whole community is weakened. The finding that for men there is a strong link between employee engagement and workplace support for flexible work was confirmed in analyses conducted on the data from the DCA (2010) project.

Increase Performance & Productivity. While it is a challenge to conduct research to establish causal links between flexible work and either job performance or productivity, several studies show a link or indicate that a link can be implied from the findings.

- *Job effectiveness.* Hill, Hawkins, Ferris and Weitzman (2001) conducted what they called a “break point analysis.” From experience at IBM, they defined the break point as when difficulty managing work-life demands becomes so onerous that it is reflected negatively in workplace outcomes. They determined the break point to be when 50% of the employees report work-life difficulty. They calculated the mathematical point in working hours per week (including commute time) at which 50% of the population reported work-life difficulty. For those without flexibility in when and where work is done the break point was 52 working hours per week. However, for those with flexibility the break point was 60 hours per week. In other words those who perceived they had flexibility were able to work an extra 8 hours per week before they perceived their work negatively influenced their personal and family life. In essence flexibility enabled them to work “an extra day a week” without creating additional work-life difficulty. Hill, Erickson, Holmes and Ferris (2010) have extended this work in their analysis of IBM data collected in 2007 from 24,436 employees in 75 countries. They found that for men who had both flexibility in working at home and in determining when they work, the difference in the break point for work-life conflict was 20 hours a week and for men with a child under 5, the difference was 30.8 hours. Clearly, this represents a significant productivity improvement opportunity for businesses.
- *Work performance.* Carlson, Grzywacz and Kacmar (2010) demonstrated that, for both men and women, schedule flexibility (flexible start and finish times) reduces work to family conflict and increases work to family enrichment, which in turn has a positive impact on self-ratings of both work and family performance and satisfaction.
- *Dealing with work overload.* Gatrell, Burnett, Cooper, Sparrow and Swan (2011) found that: (i) fathers who have more flexible working options are less troubled by stress and have a higher sense of purpose and well-being; (ii) fathers who work flexibly, compared to those who don’t, have a better work-life balance and are able to deal with work overload more effectively; and (iii) overall, work relationships are more troubling for fathers on a low income compared to higher income earners, however, when low income earners use flexible working these concerns become less troubling. As was discussed earlier, a recent Harvard University study of 60 men employed in a prestigious consulting firm (Reid, 2011) identified that men who shared a high commitment to work but bounded their availability to work (e.g. by being home at night to have family meals, not working on weekends), were in fact the highest performers (based on independently obtained performance evaluation data).

- *Organisational performance.* Root and Wooten (2008) draw attention to the current and likely future increased mismatch between the commitments and aspirations of men to be involved fathers, and the lack of flexibility many men currently experience, and especially those who are shift workers. In a study based on men employed in an auto parts plant, they show that without formal flexible work arrangements in place, active fathers engage in a variety of informal approaches, including: (i) making ad hoc arrangements with a sympathetic supervisor; (ii) having co-workers cover for their absences; and (iii) engaging in independent actions that can result in lower levels of productivity (e.g. pretending they had been involved in an accident) and place the father's job at risk (e.g. by sabotaging production machinery).
- *Minimising absenteeism.* Olsen and Dahl (2008) found that when men working irregular working hours had control over their working time (i.e. had a regulated flexible schedule or complete flexibility in work schedule) they had lower levels of self-reported absences because they were sick.

Reduce Turnover Of Male Employees. DCA research (2010) shows that men's lack of access to flexibility is adversely impacting on their turnover intentions. In the *Working for the Future* survey, 18% of men indicated that in the past six months they had seriously considered leaving their organisation because of a lack of flexibility. Young fathers and men under 35 years of age without caring responsibilities were much more likely to indicate this – 37% and 29% respectively. This represents a potential risk to organisations in terms of the loss of talent and corporate knowledge, and in terms of financial costs. A conservative estimate of the annual cost of this turnover for the entire group of men is \$2,835,000.² A U.S. survey of 963 working fathers in Fortune 500 companies found that fathers who worked in a family supportive work environment had higher job and career satisfaction, and were less likely to indicate they intended to resign from their current employer (Harrington et al., 2011).

2.3 Improving Individual, Relationship & Family Outcomes

While tangible direct business benefits can be generated from men working flexibly, indirect business benefits can also be generated, through improving outcomes for men and their families. We encourage organisations to take this bigger picture approach to the issue of men and flexibility, and consider the contribution men make to individual, family and social well-being as fathers, carers and engaged members of their communities.

Reduce Stress & Burnout. Grzywacz, Carlson and Shulkin (2008) using a large, multi-industry sample of over 19,000 workers found that stress and burnout was lower among workers engaged in all types of formal flexible arrangements. Moreover, they found that for men this generally beneficial effect of schedule flexibility was evident for all types of formal flexible arrangements. Hill et al. (2008) demonstrated that men who reported they had the flexibility they needed experienced less family to work conflict and less stress and burnout. Hill et al. (2010) reported that the difference in experienced work-life conflict between men who had flexibility in both working at home and in determining when they work, and those who had neither of these flexible work characteristics was 23%. For men with a child under five, the difference was even more pronounced, standing at 30%. Closer to home, the 2009 Australian Work and Life Index survey showed that men who requested flexibility and were fully granted this, reported lower levels of work-life interference than those who were either partially granted or declined their request (Skinner & Pocock, 2011).

² This has been calculated on the following basis with the associated assumptions. Assuming there are 1000 male employees and that 25% of the 18% resign, this would mean 45 men would leave (25% of 180 = 45). If we make a conservative estimate of the turnover cost as the average salary for the group as \$63,000 (the actual average from the DCA (2010) sample), the cost of turnover will be 45 x \$63,000 = \$2,835,000.

Enhance Family Relationships. A number of studies have revealed a positive relationship between men who access flexible work and improved family relationships (Hill et al., 2008, 2010), including Allard et al. (2011) who conducted a study of a diverse group of 377 fathers employed in six large Swedish companies and found that fathers experienced less work-to-family conflict when they work in a family-supportive organisational culture. Similarly, a recent U.S. national workforce study (Aumann et al., 2011) identified that men who work 50 hours or more a week, have high job demands, are fathers in dual-earner couples and who have high access to workplace flexibility are significantly less likely to report work-family conflict. Interestingly, research also points to a relationship between workplace conditions and quality of father-child interactions (Haas & Hwang, 2009). Findings are generally consistent in showing that higher levels of workplace demands or role overload are associated with a reduction of the quality of father-child interactions (e.g. Shreffler, Meadows & Davis, 2011). Fathers with high work demands have been found to be less accepting of their children, having higher levels of anger expression and being more emotionally withdrawn and having relationships that are characterised by a reduced capability for taking the perspective of the child (Russell & Hwang, 2004). High work demands are also likely to have a negative impact on the quality of co-parental relationships. Baxter and Smart (2010, 2011), in their Australian study, report that when the level of co-parenting support is high, this results in more positive socio-emotional outcomes for children.

In addition to considering research which examines the direct link between men working flexibly and individual, family and business outcomes, below we also review the growing body of research that focuses on fatherhood, flexibility, parental leave and paternity leave. Men accessing flexible work and leave options provides the opportunity for them to be more engaged in both caregiving and parenting. We reviewed findings earlier in the report that showed that a significant number of men are seeking to be active fathers. Important questions then are: what impact does active fathering have and should this be of concern to organisations? The research data suggests that the role of men as fathers should be of interest to organisations. Research findings show that when men are actively involved in fatherhood, several positive outcomes are found (Haas & Hwang, 2009).

Active Fathering & Psychological Well-Being. There is a substantial body of research showing that fathers' active engagement in parenting, which of course is enabled by flexible work and careers, has a positive impact on their psychological well-being (Ashbourne, Daly & Brown, 2011; Hawkins & Dollahite, 2007; Palkovitz, 2007, 2002; Plantin, Olukoya & Ny, 2011; Snarey 1993), as well as that of their partner (Plantin et al., 2011; Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004), and indeed for the quality of marital and couple relationships (Pleck & Masciadrelli 2004). Interestingly, Pleck and Masciadrelli (2004) report that father involvement is linked not only with both the psychological well-being and self-esteem of mothers, but also on their improved success in the labour market. Moreover, generally findings indicate there is a positive relationship between father involvement and the quality of the father-child relationships (Pleck & Masciadrelli 2004).

Active Fathering & Equitable Division of Labour. Other research provides evidence that engaged fathering can change the gendered division of labour in that fathers have an increased understanding of their partners' everyday life after they take leave, indicating a greater recognition of unpaid work (Almqvist, Sandberg & Dahlgren, 2011). Indeed, one Norwegian study found an association between fathers taking four weeks of parental leave and reduced levels of couple conflict over housework and greater equality in the division of household tasks (Kotsadam & Finseraas, 2011).³ Facilitating the more equitable and less gendered division of labour at home has direct relevance for organisations, as it frees up women to increase their participation in and engagement with the workplace.

3 While encouraging, researchers note that the overall picture is that fathers' behavioural changes relate more to the men's care of children, and less to their involvement in care of the household (Almqvist et al., 2011).

All in All. DCA (2010) survey research findings are generally consistent with those reported in the academic literature and in other countries, demonstrating the positive flow on effects of flexibility on business and individual and family outcomes. We conducted simple correlations between a range of single items and composite measures (all with satisfactory psychometric properties). A further, more sophisticated analysis is planned in the future. In summary, we found that when men were employed in a workplace where there was both management and team/workgroup support for flexible work, they were also more likely to report:

- Finding it easy to manage the demands of their work and personal life;
- Being able to take time off during the work day to take care of personal or family matters;
- Experiencing less negative spill-over from work to family/personal life;
- Having better physical and emotional health; and
- Being more highly engaged with their organisation.

In an additional analysis based on the model of Carlson, Grzywacz and Kacmar (2010) presented above, we divided our male sample into three groups on the basis of responses to the question: "How easy or difficult is it for you to manage the demands of your work and personal/family life?" The first group were those who responded "very easy", the second were those who responded "easy" and the third "difficult or very difficult". We were then interested in whether those who responded "very easy/easy" were more likely to have: (i) access to, and experience support for, flexible work; (ii) higher levels of health and well-being; and (iii) higher levels of satisfaction with their jobs and family/personal life. As can be seen from Table 2 and Figure 3 overleaf, we indeed found strong support for these hypotheses.

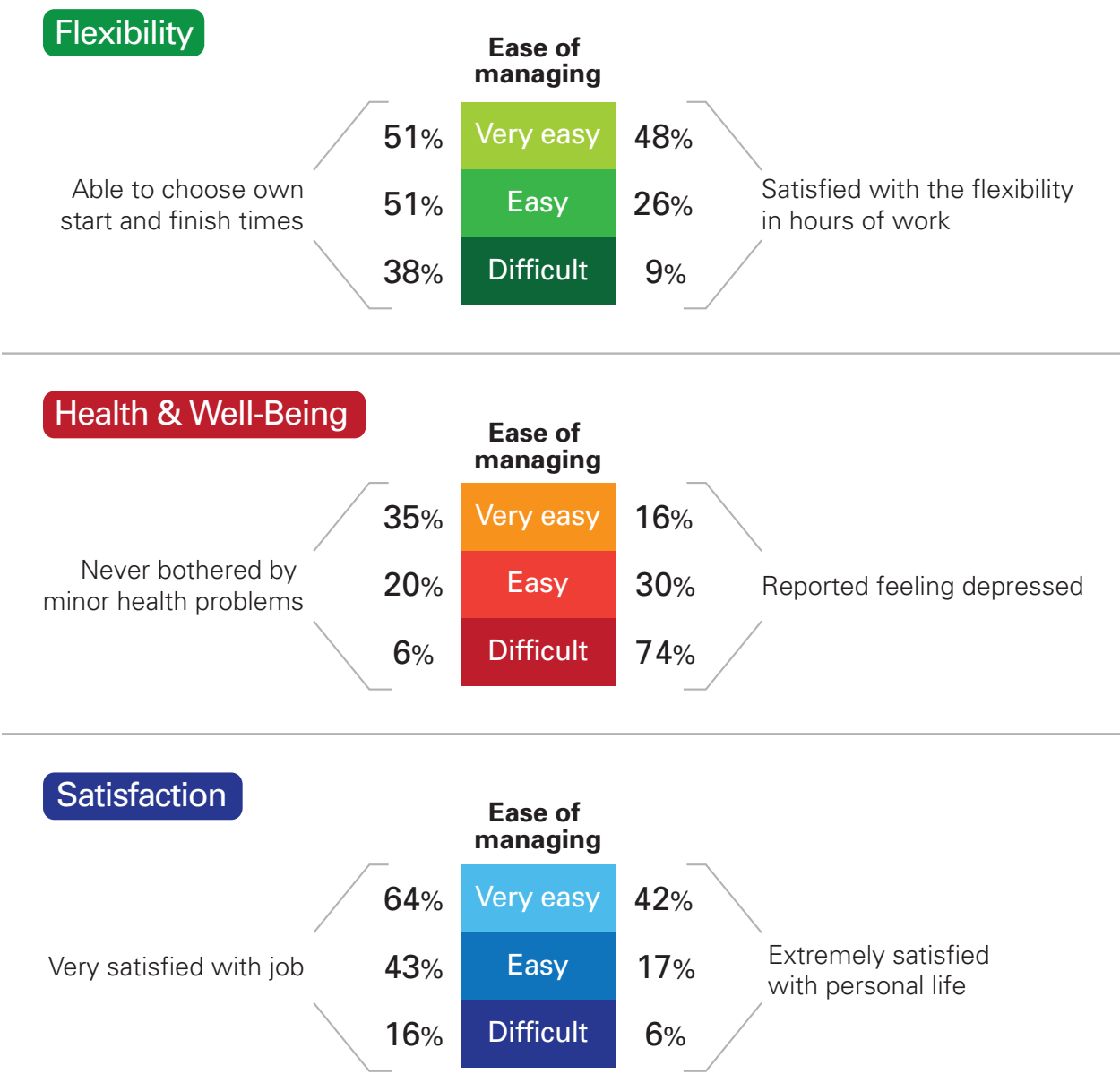
Highlights of the findings include:

- 48% of those in the "very easy" group are satisfied with the flexibility in hours of work compared with 9% in the "difficult" group.
- 42% of those in the "very easy" group report that their immediate supervisor is responsive to their family/personal needs compared with 19% in the "difficult" group.
- 35% of those in the "very easy" group are never bothered by minor health problems compared with 6% in the "difficult" group.
- 16% of those in the "very easy" group reported feeling depressed in the past month compared with 74% in the "difficult" group.
- 64% of those in the "very easy" group are very satisfied with their jobs compared with 16% in the "difficult" group.
- 42% of those in the "very easy" group are extremely satisfied with their personal life compared with 6% in the "difficult" group.

Table 2: Men's Ease Of Managing Work-Life Demands And Flexibility, Work, Family and Health Outcomes (DCA *Working for the Future* Data)

	% Respondents		
	Very Easy	Easy	Difficult
Flexibility			
Able to choose own start and finish times	51	51	38
Able to temporarily change start and finish times on short notice	83	84	65
Not hard to take time off during the day to care for personal or family matters	45	29	19
Satisfied with the flexibility in hours of work	48	26	9
Strongly agree I have the flexibility I need to manage my family/personal responsibilities	46	27	13
Strongly agree I have the support of my co-workers so that I can manage my work and personal life	33	19	9
My immediate supervisor is responsive to my needs when I have family/personal business to take care of	42	34	19
Health & Well-Being			
Never bothered by minor health problems	35	20	6
Never have trouble sleeping	39	23	4
Reported feeling depressed	16	30	74
Job Satisfaction			
Very satisfied with job	64	43	16
Very likely to seek a new job in the next 2 years	9	10	27
I am proud to tell people where I work	52	36	25
Family & Life Satisfaction			
Extremely satisfied with personal life	42	17	6
Extremely satisfied with family life	46	22	7
Extremely satisfied with relationship with partner	43	23	11

Figure 3: Men’s Ease Of Managing Work-Life Demands And Flexibility, Work, Family and Health Outcomes (DCA *Working for the Future* Data)



2.4 Summing Up

Drawing it all together, the evidence reviewed above demonstrates the critical need for organisations to place a higher priority on men and flexibility because:

- Demographics have changed and more men in the workforce are now experiencing higher levels of demand in terms of balancing their work and family/personal commitments.
- There is considerable diversity within men and many now do not conform to the ideal worker model and have different priorities and aspirations (e.g. to be active fathers).
- Workplace flexibility is a key driver of employment decisions for men, including young men, men approaching retirement and especially men who are both younger and are fathers.

- Men who have the flexibility that meets their work and family/personal needs are more likely to be engaged and to contribute their discretionary effort.
- Men who have greater access to flexible work that results in a reduction of either work/life conflict or reduced work to family/personal life spillover:
 - Are more effective in their jobs, report higher work performance, are less troubled by work overload, take fewer risks that can compromise productivity and are absent for fewer days; and
 - Have lower levels of personal stress and burnout and work-life interference or conflict.
- Fathers who have greater workplace flexibility experience lower levels of work to family conflict, and higher quality parenting and family relationships.
- Active fathering has been found to relate to higher quality family relationships, the psychological well-being of men and to gender equality both in domestic work and in paid employment.

3

WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATE-OF-PLAY?



In this chapter we consider the current state of play for men and workplace flexibility in Australian workplaces, examining in particular the extent to which men value and utilise flexible work.

We do this through drawing on findings from academic and industry research, as well as DCA's *Get Flexible!* (2012) and *Working for the Future* (2010) research projects.

3.1 Flexibility As An Employment Driver

A Significant Number Of Men Want Flexible Work. DCA (2010) research reveals that flexibility is one of the top five employment drivers for each of five groups of male workers – men overall, young fathers, male managers, men under 35 without caring responsibilities and men who are over 55 years of age. As noted previously, survey participants were asked how important each of ten job characteristics would be to them if they were looking for a new job. “Having the flexibility I need to manage my family/personal life” was in the top five for all groups. For young fathers, this was even more critical, being the third most highly valued job characteristic. It is also worth noting that both pay and job security were rated very highly for the young fathers.

Other studies lend credence to these findings. Page and Feenstra (2011) for instance found that 75% of surveyed Australian male workers expressed a desire to spend more time and energy with their families, and 62% reported that their life as a whole would be better if they could get work-life balance and that they would work harder if their employer encouraged work-life balance. A U.S. survey of 963 working fathers in Fortune 500 companies found that job security and having flexible work options were rated as more important than having good advancement opportunities and high income (Harrington et al., 2011).

Higher Priority Is Given To Flextime Than To Part-Time Work. In relation to preferred forms of flexible work, as Table 3 below illustrates, overall men in DCA's *Working for the Future* survey indicated a preference (in order) for increased opportunities to choose their start and finish times (64%), work a compressed week (56%), work some regular hours at home (34%), and work

	% Respondents		
	All Men	Young Fathers	Managers
Currently choose start and finish times	41	41	57
Prefer to choose start and finish times	64	79	84
Currently work a compressed week	11	24	11
Prefer to work compressed week	56	79	45
Currently work part of their regular hours at home	13	13	25
Prefer to work part of regular hours at home	34	56	41
Currently work part-time	16	3	7
Prefer to work part-time	20	6	15

part-time (20%). Apart from part-time work, all other flexible work options were preferred much more by young fathers than by men in general or by managers.

Our finding that men prefer to access flextime above other forms of flexibility is supported by Hill, Jacob, Shannon, Brennan, Blanchard and Martinengo's (2008) multi-company survey of 143,391 employees, which showed that flextime was the option most highly valued by men. These authors noted that men have very little interest in and almost no use of job sharing and part-time work, options that would decrease their pay.

3.2 Men's Utilisation Of Flexible Work

While A Majority Of Men Want Flexible Work, Uptake Is Moderate. DCA's *Working for the Future* survey identified that for all groups of men their current engagement in flexible work is moderate. As Table 4 below illustrates, overall, while a relatively large proportion of men access informal flextime (79%) and formal flextime (41%), considerably less work part-time (16%), regularly from home (13%) or a compressed week (11%). Apart from part-time work, all other flexible work options were preferred much more by young fathers than by men in general or by managers. Overall, it seems that managers have greater access to flexible work than do the other two groups. These findings highlight the need for organisations to encourage men to take up flexible work, particularly at non-managerial levels where up-take is lower, and amongst young fathers.

Table 4: Men's Access To, And Utilisation Of Flexible Work (DCA <i>Working for the Future</i> Data)			
	% Respondents		
	Men Overall	Young Fathers	Male Managers
Formalised flexible work			
Work part-time	16	3	7
Allowed to choose own starting/finishing times within some range of hours.	49	48	67
Actually choose start and finish times.	41	43	57
Allowed to work part of regular paid hours at home.	21	15	39
Regularly do paid work at home.	13	13	25
Working a compressed work-week is possible	24	30	25
Actually work a compressed work week	11	24	11
Informal flexible work			
Have "complete" or "a lot" of control over work hours	41	48	60
Have "very little" or "no control" over work hours	31	31	17
Find it hard or somewhat hard to take time off during a work-day to take care of personal or family matters.	26	37	23
Able to temporarily vary start and finish times on short notice when a special need arises.	79	81	92

Men Are More Likely To ‘Tinker’ With Flexibility. DCA research indicates that, while women are most likely to access long parental leave and part-time work, the men in this sample are most likely to access the following forms of flexible work:

1. Relatively short periods of leave following the birth or adoption of their child.
 - DCA’s (2010) *Working for the Future* survey found that, of the men with children, 75% said that they had taken time off work after their youngest child’s birth or adoption. For 83% of these, they took less than 6 weeks off; 7% took 6 weeks off; and 9% took more time off than this. Of these, 51% took this leave on full pay; 10% on partial pay; and 33% took the leave without pay.
2. Informal flexibility around full-time roles
 - Interviews and focus groups with men conducted as part of DCA’s *Get Flexible!* project found that men were more likely to ‘tinker’ than ‘transform’ when working flexibly (i.e. access temporary *ad hoc* flexibility rather than on-going reduced hours flexibility). Where men worked flexibly, this was most likely to be done in an informal and dynamic way, while still maintaining a full time work load. Taken together, the flexibility views of the group of men focused more on: working remotely, as necessary and engaging in a full time work, but managing how and when this work is done.
 - Other research confirms this finding (Atkinson & Hall, 2009; Gregory & Milner, 2011). A U.S. survey of almost 1000 working fathers identified that they utilise informal flexible work arrangements at a much higher rate than formal flexible work arrangements (Harrington et al., 2011). In-depth interviews with 33 working fathers, also conducted in the U.S., found these men were far more likely to exercise informal flexibility than ask for a formal flexible work arrangement, and while many used flexibility to be available to share childcare responsibilities (e.g. drop-off or pick-up at a childcare centre) or attend doctor’s appointments, this was always done in an informal or “stealth” fashion (Harrington et al., 2010).

3.3 Summing Up

Drawing it all together, the evidence reviewed above shows that:

- A significant number of men desire greater access to flexible work than they currently experience and this is especially the case for young fathers.
- More men are interested in flextime, compressed work-weeks and working from home than in part-time work.
- More men tend to ‘tinker’ with flexible work. Very few currently work part-time (and very few desire this as an option), and very few take extended leave at the time of a child’s birth or adoption.

4 ENGAGING MEN AROUND FLEXIBILITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION



DCA and project sponsors released this report as we recognised a need to investigate and report on how Australian organisations can mainstream quality flexible work and careers in their workplaces through focusing on the issue of men and flexibility.

So far in this report, we have learned that a significant number of men want flexible work but their uptake is moderate only, and most commonly involves ‘tinkering’ with flexibility (i.e. informal flextime and *ad hoc* working from home structured around full-time work) (see Chapter 3). We also know that organisations and men and their families can benefit from men’s higher utilisation of flexible work (see Chapter 2).

What then, can be done in order to increase men’s engagement in flexible work and thus enable flexibility to move from the margins to mainstream? In this chapter we provide a framework for action for organisations seeking to mainstream flexibility through focusing on the issue of men and flexibility. In developing this framework for organisational action, we draw on findings from academic and industry research, as well as DCA’s *Get Flexible!* (2012) and *Working for the Future* (2010) research projects. We begin by identifying key lessons from the research, before developing these into a framework for organisational action represented in diagram form.

4.1 Reframe Flexible Work

Make A Compelling Business Case For Addressing Men & Flexibility. Organisations would be well placed to develop and communicate the connection between flexibility for men and organisational productivity and sustainability. Australian organisations have historically viewed flexible work as relevant primarily to mothers of young children (DCA, 2012), and so the business case for making flexible work available to men has been inadequately elucidated. Yet, as Chapter 2 made clear, there is an abundance of research demonstrating the return on investment for considering flexibility as it relates to men.

Emphasise Work-Life Enrichment Versus Conflict. Findings from DCA’s *Working for the Future* survey demonstrate the positive impact of family/personal life on work and vice versa for working men. Specifically, 68% of men overall indicated they had applied what they had learned in their personal/family life to work, 63% said they had more energy to do their job because of their family/personal life and 72% indicated they had been in a better mood at work because of their personal/family life. Conversely, 62% of male respondents reported applying what they had learned at work to their family/personal life and 58% that they had been in a better mood at home because of their job. Baxter and Smart (2011) also report on the positive impact that work has on fathers’ experiences of their family life. In all, 72% of their sample of fathers with young children (over 16,000) reported that working helps them to better appreciate the time they spend with their children and 55% reported that working has a positive impact on my children. Other DCA *Working for the Future* findings provide further evidence of the positive impact family can have on work: we found that male managers with care-giving responsibilities (a proxy for working fathers) were rated more highly by their staff on both work-life capabilities and generic people management capabilities than their male managerial colleagues with no care-giving responsibilities. With these findings in mind, we suggest organisations encourage male managers and employees to support and utilise flexible work by emphasising how work and family may enrich one another, rather than conflict.

Emphasise Informal & Formal Flexibility. Recent research reveals the importance of redefining flexibility so that it emphasises and legitimises both formal and informal flexible work for men. According to findings from a study based in France and the UK (Gregory & Milner, 2011) policies work best when fathers are given a sense of entitlement, by giving specific rights linked to fatherhood (e.g. paternity leave or “daddy month”-type arrangements), and/or, by providing universal rights (e.g. to reduced working time and/or flexible working time). The researchers found that informal flexibility is used and valued by fathers within organisations, but that such informal arrangements are highly subject to local variation and intermediation by line managers and co-workers; hence, for effective and even coverage they would need to be backed up by formal rights. Other researchers recommend greater emphasis be given to informal flexibility and the associated reciprocity, particularly in relation to men – for example, Atkinson and Hall’s (2009) research shows that male employees who adopt a breadwinner role are more likely to use informal flexibility to integrate work and other commitments. This meant that there was not a reduction in salary and it did not impact negatively on perceptions of job commitment and career progression. Our view is that organisational attention must be given to both informal and formal flexible work. Relying on informal flexibility only is likely to disadvantage lower paid, lower status men who might benefit most, yet have less access than their managerial male colleagues.

4.2 Focus On Diversity Amongst Men

A recurring theme of the research reviewed for this report has been a focus on the diversity of men and their needs for flexible work, and in different workplaces, and to avoid stereotyping men.

Men’s Varying Work Identities. A common stereotype is that all men either conform to or are motivated by the ideal worker model in which they focus primarily on work and being ‘unencumbered’ by family and personal responsibilities. Yet research clearly challenges this assumption. A recent U.S. survey of 1,298 working men, uncovered a range of identities of men in relation to work and family/ personal life, as well as a relatively even distribution of men across these identities (Aumann et al., 2011). Specifically, the researchers found that 29% of working men held a work-centric identity (i.e. more work-focused), 36% were family-centric (i.e. more family-focused) and 35% dual-centric (i.e. focused equally on work and family). Moreover, in a study of 2,312 people employed across six countries and in a range of large private sector organisations, Linkow et al. (2011) found that contrary to the common stereotype about men, both men *and* women reported comparable work identity and personal/family identity. Such findings about the diversity in men’s identities and work and family/ personal life priorities support those of Page and Feenstra (2011), Reid (2011) and Yarwood (2011). Linkow et al. (2011) recommends that men should take the lead in challenging the myths about men, and actively participate in male-only forums to change organisational policies and practice to ensure these better align with this reality. That is, for men themselves to become advocates of a focus on the diversity of men and by this, break down the stereotypes and assumptions about men having a single focus on work and career success.

Age Diversity Amongst Men. As noted earlier, the ability to work flexibly has been identified as an important employment driver for men of many age groups, including young fathers, young men with no care-giving responsibilities and men approaching retirement. DCA’s *Grey Matters* research (2007) found that 91% of mature-age men considered “having a job that suits my needs in relation to hours of work and flexibility” as important in influencing their decision to continue employment beyond ‘retirement’. More recently, DCA’s *Working for the Future* survey found that flexibility is one of the top five employment drivers for men from all three age demographics referred to above. Indeed, for young fathers, this was even more critical, being the third most highly valued job characteristic.

Gay Men. It is equally important to acknowledge diversity in men's socio-demographic backgrounds and the way this can impact upon their needs for flexible work. While not always publicly well acknowledged, gay men are increasingly fathering children, including on their own, from a previous heterosexual relationship, as part of a gay male couple or in partnership with lesbian families. Indeed, research suggests approximately one third of gay men have care-giving responsibilities, whether for children, elderly people or family members with an illness or disability (Fredriksen, 1999), and approximately 10% are parents (McNair & Thomacos, 2005; Millbank, 2003), with all indications being this proportion will increase in the future (Millbank, 2003; Perlesz & McNair, 2004). In their efforts to bring a focus on 'men and flexibility', organisations should ensure they do not make heterosexist assumptions that fathering (or indeed care-giving more broadly) is the exclusive domain of heterosexual men.

Indigenous Men. For many Indigenous men the family unit can be understood and lived differently to non-Indigenous men, as the concept of parenting in Indigenous communities not only relates to the child's immediate parents, but also to extended family and kin. Moreover, relative to non-Indigenous households, these family members can play a greater and more pro-active role in parenting, decision making, child care, as well as in education and passing on cultural knowledge, customs and family beliefs (ABS, 2012; NSW Department of Community Services, 2009). Organisations need to understand how such differences in family and parenting approaches may influence Aboriginal men's identities, priorities and aspirations in relation to work and caring.

Male Carers. At last count there were 2.6 million carers in Australia accounting for 11% of all men (ABS, 2009). ABS statistics reveal that 898,400 male carers are of prime working age (between 15 and 64), and 40% of primary carers are employed and 52% of employed primary carers work part time (ABS, 2009). Consultations carried out for the National Disability Strategy identified access to paid work and the availability of flexible working arrangements as key issues for carers (Carers Australia, 2011). The ageing of Australia's population and a decreasing working age cohort will inevitably place increasing stress on working age carers to remain in the workforce while providing care and support for their ageing parents and other family members (Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2009).

Men's Cultural Backgrounds. Australian research reveals the immense challenges that migrants and their parents face as they try to negotiate the competing demands of their (local) Australian work and family lives and an ongoing engagement with their (transnational) geographically distant family networks (Baldassar, 2007; Wilding & Baldassar, 2009). Here, part-time work or flex-time may be of greater benefit for navigating local work-family activities, while those needing to regularly travel overseas for extended periods may find longer weekly hours complemented by longer annual leave periods of greater benefit (Wilding & Baldassar, 2009).

Men With Disability. At last count, 11% of employed Australian men (i.e. 580,900) reported having a disability that limited or restricted their everyday activities, and a further 52,200 men with disabilities were looking for work (ABS, 2011a). Labour force outcomes for people with disabilities remain poor in Australia with men with a disability aged 15-64 years having a participation rate of only 60% (compared with 89% for men with no disability) (ABS, 2011a). The ability to access flexibility in the workplace is critical for the successful recruitment and retention of many employees with disabilities (AHRC, 2006). Particular emphasis has been given to the benefits of flexibility for supporting people with a mental illness at work (AHRC, 2010). With 1 in 5 Australians grappling with a mental illness at any given time, and almost half of the Australian population (45.5%) experiencing mental illness at some point in their lifetime (ABS, 2007), the importance of providing such workplace support cannot be underestimated.

4.3 Focus On Organisational & Team Culture

Address The Lack Of Workplace Support For Flexible Work. DCA's *Working for the Future* survey findings underscore the importance of organisations addressing a common experience of men that workplace support for flexibility is lacking. This is particularly the case for young fathers. The survey considered workplace support for flexibility at three levels: co-worker, managerial and organisational culture. As Table 5 below and overleaf illustrates, we found that workplace support for flexibility for these men is not high and that, where present, is more likely to be experienced from co-workers rather than the organisational culture. While views about immediate managers were quite positive, it should be noted that the majority of the questions below are framed in terms of reactive responsiveness to caregiving issues. These questions do not address fundamental issues about the active engagement of managers adopting a leadership position with respect to mainstreaming flexible work.

Table 5: Support For Men To Access Flexible Work (DCA <i>Working for the Future</i> Data)			
QU: How much do you agree or disagree about the following statements as descriptions of your main job and your feelings about work?	% Strongly Agreed/Agreed		
	Men Overall	Young Fathers	Male Managers
Personal Flexibility			
Have the freedom to decide what I do in my job.	57	65	77
I have a lot of say about what happens on my job	60	66	84
Have the flexibility I need to manage my personal/family responsibilities	78	77	84
Is easy or very easy to manage the demands of my work and personal life	50	39	46
Is somewhat or very hard to take time off during the work day to take care of personal or family matters	26	37	23
Employees have to choose between advancing in their jobs or devoting time to their personal life	40	72	52
Have been discriminated against on the basis of family responsibilities.	9	16	4
My job allows me the flexibility I need to balance my work and family/personal life.	78	70	82
Satisfied with the flexibility in hours of work	75	73	79
Am comfortable in using the flexible work options available	72	73	78
In the past 6 months have considered resigning because of a lack of flexibility in job.	18	37	65
Co-Worker Support			
Have the support of my co-workers so that I can manage my work and personal life	72	72	79
My co-workers are flexible when others have family/personal demands.	79	73	84

Table 5: Support For Men To Access Flexible Work (DCA <i>Working for the Future</i> Data)			
QU: How much do you agree or disagree about the following statements as descriptions of your main job and your feelings about work?	% Strongly Agreed/Agreed		
	Men Overall	Young Fathers	Male Managers
My Immediate Manager/Supervisor			
Is responsive to my needs when I have family or personal business to take care of	87	87	88
Is understanding when I talk about person/family issues that affect my work	75	86	78
Helps me feel comfortable bringing up personal/family issues with them	68	79	73
Cares about the effects that work can having on personal/family life	73	84	79
Flexible Work Culture			
The advancement and growth of part-time employees is actively supported.	51	46	56
It is very difficult to work part-time and have a career in my organisation	52	75	53
Flexible work practices are applied consistently	52	66	59
Work in an environment where flexibility is promoted and encouraged.	45	50	52
Feel free to speak up about flexibility needs	66	70	72
My commitment would be questioned if I used flexible work options.	36	24	39

The most striking finding from the data in Table 5 is the very different experiences and perceptions of young fathers. They are more likely to report difficulties in managing the demands of their work and personal life, find it harder to take time off during the day to take care of personal or family matters, feel they have to choose between advancing in their jobs and devoting time to their personal life, and that they felt they had been discriminated against on the basis of their family responsibilities. They also had more negative views about their workplace's support for part-time work. Overall, all groups were more positive about the support they get from their co-workers and were less positive about the degree to which their workplace culture supports flexible work.

Pro-Active Communication Campaigns To Encourage Men To Engage in Flexible Work.

Organisational (and broader community) communication campaigns are a critical element of challenging and shifting prevailing attitudes, expectations and cultural norms that hinder men working flexibly. The importance of such campaigns is illustrated by recent Swedish research which investigated why some counties have significantly higher father parental leave up-take rates than others (Almqvist et al., 2011). The researchers established that differences were attributable in large part to the higher leave take-up counties having communication campaigns promoting increased use of leave days for fathers.

4.4 Focus On Leadership Commitment & Capability

Senior Role Models. Interviews and focus groups conducted as part of DCA's *Get Flexible!* project revealed that men identified the lack of senior role models and 'flexibility champions' as problematic for encouraging them to utilise flexible work and mainstreaming flexibility. Participants noted that senior roles are typically held by men who adopt standard and more rigid ways of working. Male role models working flexibly are often lacking within an organisation. Irrespective of their gender, it is commonplace for senior leaders to work long hours and model behaviours that are inconsistent with mainstreamed flexibility. *Get Flexible!* male managers were less likely than female managers to work flexibly – reinforcing the view that there are fewer male role models working flexibly.

Develop Leadership Commitment & Capabilities. The findings of Allard et al. (2011) and earlier findings of Haas and Hwang (2009) draw attention to the need to change the workplace culture and for leaders to place greater emphasis on the value of men engaging in both work and family life. Linkow et al. (2011) have also identified a fundamental contradiction: leaders' endorsement of the business case for work-life integration for men and their reluctance to put this into action. They argue that many leaders perceive the risks of implementation to be higher than the benefits because they do not have a concrete view about how work-life and flexibility and work innovation (redesigning how, when and where work is done) actually operate. Their recommendations for addressing this issue include:

- Encourage leaders who have experienced and embraced work-life to communicate this in a compelling way.
- Develop tools to address the fears that leaders have.
- Enable executive leaders to develop stories about their experiences in using flexibility.
- Enable work group leaders to also develop these stories and to develop the skills to dialogue with work groups.
- Develop tool kits for conducting meaningful dialogues.
- Start with the business challenges and then align flexible work with these.
- Institutionalise work-life into an organisation's culture.

4.5 Create A New Model Of Success

DCA's *Get Flexible!* interviews and focus groups with men revealed they often saw flexibility as incongruent with models of success. These men appeared reluctant to take up flexible work options, due to the assumed cost that it will have on their career progression. Working flexibly was seen as a career limiting move and something that women generally do. As was reported earlier, in the DCA *Working for the Future* study, only 46% of young fathers indicated that the advancement and growth of part-time employees is actively encouraged, and 75% agreed that it is very difficult in their organisations to work part-time and have a career. Shifting the way people work across all levels of the organisation and illustrating how career progression is possible in flexible roles is necessary for a broader group of men to perceive this as a legitimate career option. Amongst *Get Flexible!* participants, the view was that until senior leaders begin to work flexibly themselves, it will be very challenging to encourage other men to engage in flexible work.

4.6 Focus On Leadership & Support Within Teams

All groups in DCA's *Get Flexible!* study identified that the relationship between individuals, their managers and colleagues is what makes flexible work arrangements successful. This is confirmed by other research showing:

- Managerial and co-worker support for work life and active fatherhood plays a key role in increasing men's utilisation of parental leave (Haas, Allard & Hwang, 2002);
- Managerial and co-worker support for work-life reduces men's risk of work-family conflict – particularly for men with family responsibilities, for whom being able to engage in a dialogue with their supervisors about family and personal issues has a significant positive impact (Aumann et al., 2011); and
- Co-worker support assists men juggle work and family/personal life by serving as an extended, informal network that provides psychological support and takes a collective approach to work (Root & Wooden, 2008).

The values of each individual manager can affect how well flexibility is integrated within that team, particularly in male-dominated workplaces. Given that most senior people are men, the views of these individuals and the behaviours they engage in as role models can have an effect on how men and women use flexible work arrangements.

4.7 Focus On Fatherhood As A Flexibility Enabler

Focus On Fatherhood As A Flexibility Enabler. DCA's *Get Flexible!* participants identified fatherhood as a good entry point for initiating discussions with men about flexible work. There was a view that conversations about integrating long-term flexibility beyond parental leave could be the pathway to increasing men's utilisation of flexible work. This view is supported by European researchers who contend that for the current generation of fathers paternity leave (short-term leave specifically designated for fathers) is becoming "normative" and is being seen as an important time for enhancing family togetherness and personal identity (O'Brien & Moss, 2010). A cautionary note however – organisations should avoid over-relying on paternity leave to normalise flexibility for men. Haas and Hwang (2009) report that despite the egalitarian approach to parental leave in Sweden (it is a legislative right for both mothers and fathers), mothers still take the majority of the leave. Further, while they have detected a shift for companies to be more supportive of fathers taking leave, they found that the majority of Swedish companies are still not supportive, and greater company support is given to white collar rather than blue collar workers for taking the leave entitlements.

See Fatherhood As More Than A Breadwinner Role. Harrington et al.'s (2010) study of 33 'new working dads' (i.e. recent first time fathers with a child 3 to 18 months old) identified a strong cultural perspective in organisations that when men become fathers, little will change on the work front. Yet, concurrently, the 'new dads' they talked with were often reducing their career expectations and desire to work long hours based on their new parental responsibilities. With this in mind, the researchers called for organisations to "see fatherhood as a more serious and time consuming role and stop assuming that being a good father simply equates to being a good breadwinner" (p. 28).

4.8 Bringing It All Together: An Organisational Framework for Action

Drawing on key lessons learned from the above DCA and other research, we have developed the following framework for action for organisations seeking to mainstream flexibility through focusing on the issue of 'men and flexibility.'

What should be evident from this framework is that engaging men around flexibility is not necessarily about designing and implementing discrete programs or initiatives for men at work. Such initiatives certainly have a place – for example, the *Men and Work* program developed by Graeme Russell and the *Staying Connected* Program developed by the Child Support Agency.⁴ Engaging men is about broadening the approach and being inclusive of the diversity of men and their priorities and aspirations. This implies giving attention to integrating a focus on men and flexibility across existing initiatives and strategies relating to flexibility and cultural change, leadership commitment and capability development, high performing teams and career development.

4 The *Men and Work* program focuses on four issues: Work/Life Balance; Physical and Psychological Health; Close Relationships; and Fatherhood and Mentoring. This program has been successfully implemented in a range of private and public sector organisations (e.g. ABC, AMP, Alcoa, ANZ, IBM). *Staying Connected* is a program for separated fathers and focuses on Physical and Psychological Health; Co-parenting; and Father-Child relationships. This program has been successfully implemented in Australia, the UK and in Singapore.

Figure 4: DCA's *Men Get Flexible!* Framework for Organisational Action



5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE



DCA and project sponsors the Westpac Group, Stockland, Origin and Allens hope this project and its findings will constitute a 'call to action' for Australian business and the general community to consider the role of men and flexibility in mainstreaming flexibility in Australian workplaces. Drawing on lessons learned from conducting this project, DCA makes the following recommendations for the future.

For Organisations:

1. Articulate a business case for engaging men around flexibility in your organisation.
2. Get clear on what it would look and feel like if men in your organisation were engaged in flexible work and flexible careers.
3. Use the seven components of the 'Men Get Flexible' framework to engage men in the mainstreaming flexibility journey.
4. Take a first step by engaging senior leadership teams in an enquiry process similar to that used in this project.
 - *Why flexibility for men?* What is our business case for a focus on men and flexibility?
 - *What is the current situation?* Do men value flexible work in our organisation? To what extent do they utilise it and in what forms? What is the diversity amongst men in terms of valuing and utilising flexible work?
 - *What needs to change?* How can we increase men's engagement in flexible work and thus move flexible work from the margins to the mainstream?
5. Consider men's experiences of both accessing flexible work and careers AND leading organisational approaches to mainstreaming flexible work. While many men may be interested in accessing flexible work, not all will necessarily be in a leadership position that enables them to lead the 'flexibility charge.'
6. Develop a set of process and outcome indicators for, and measures, of men's effective engagement in flexible work and flexible careers.
7. Focus on men and flexibility as part of your organisation's strategy to mainstream flexibility, but be cautious about treating this as the silver bullet for delivering on your flexibility, diversity and gender equality objectives.
8. Take a bigger picture approach to the issue of men and flexibility, and consider the contribution men and fathers make to individual, family and social well-being. There is an abundance of research demonstrating the positive impact engaged fathering has on men themselves, women and children, and organisations can play a key role (in addition to government, community and families themselves) in facilitating this through making flexible work and careers standard business practice.
9. Recognise that gender equality at work depends in part on gender equality at home. Consider how your organisation's communication strategies around flexibility can validate men increasing their overall engagement in caregiving and household work. Facilitating the more equitable and less gendered division of labour at home can have positive flow on consequences for your organisation, as women are freed up to increase their participation in and engagement with the workplace.

Generate A Business & Community Debate

1. Design a business and community awareness campaign to:
 - Reframe the debate about flexible work and flexible careers so that it focuses on *mutually beneficial* flexibility for employers and employees. This should engage directly with the evidence that links mainstreamed flexibility and: (i) business performance, productivity and sustainability, and (ii) workforce well-being and sustainability (see DCA's *Get Flexible!* report).
 - Focus on the community benefits of flexibility in terms of personal and family well-being, as well as the community risks and costs associated with not mainstreaming flexibility.
 - Use the framework for organisational action to identify organisations that are effectively engaging men in their mainstreaming flexibility journey, and publicise these.
 - Challenge gender-based societal and organisational expectations and norms about care-giving, household responsibilities and domestic organisation, with a view to encouraging men to increase their overall engagement in these areas and thus address the persistent gendered division of labour in Australian families. This is not solely the responsibility of workplaces and requires a shift in thinking across the community more broadly.
2. Actively engage in debates with employer organisations, unions and governments to show how flexible work based on mutuality and made available to both men and women can and will contribute to increased productivity and to the success of the Australian economy.

MEN GET FLEXIBLE AT WESTPAC



Westpac Banking Corporation (**Westpac**) which was founded in 1817, has a long and proud history as Australia's first and oldest bank.¹ The Westpac Group has branches and controlled entities throughout Australia, New Zealand and the near Pacific region and maintains offices in key financial centres around the world including London, New York, Hong Kong and Singapore. As at 30 September 2011, the Westpac Group employed approximately 38,000 people (39% men and 61% women) and was ranked in the top 5 listed companies by market capitalisation on the Australian Securities Exchange Limited (ASX).

Westpac's vision is to be one of the world's great companies for diversity and flexibility. To achieve this, Westpac has embarked on a journey to mainstream flexible work and careers in its workplaces. Of late, we have taken a fresh focus to the role that all employees, including our male leaders, have in taking and influencing the uptake of flexible work options.

Westpac recognises that flexible work represents an important employee value proposition for many men (and women). Indeed, Westpac's most recent Diversity Survey (with a response rate close to 50%) found that 53% of men (60% women) have personal or life-stage needs that they would like to see Westpac accommodate through flexible working in the near future. The most common work-life requirements for men relate to (in order of frequency) child-care, travel, study, school holidays, graduated retirement and eldercare.

Westpac's Diversity Survey findings indicate that these requirements will see the largest increase in demand arising in flexitime, regular work from home and flexible leave days – though we also anticipate an increasing demand for career break and additional purchased leave for men and women looking to travel, study or take school holidays off.

Flexibility reframed

A first step in considering men and flexibility has been to analyse the current situation, including male employees' utilisation of flexible work at Westpac.

Our findings are in alignment with those of this research project – namely, male employees are interested in flexible work and will access occasional flexibility (e.g. flexitime, occasional work from home) rather than regular formal flexibility arrangements (e.g. part-time work, condensed workweek, regular work from home).

Westpac's Diversity Survey found that 36% of men (48% women) engaged in some form of flexible work, with 29% men accessing occasional flexibility and 7% regular flexibility. More specifically, male employees are most likely to access occasional work from home (20%) and flexitime (13%), followed by other regular forms of flexible work (11% for regular work from home, part-time work and flexible leave days). Our Diversity Survey also identified that male employees access flexibility for a broad range of reasons including care-giving (child-care, elder care) but also extending beyond this to include 'well-being' reasons such as travel, study and sporting and leisure activities.

¹ Westpac was established in 1817 as the Bank of New South Wales under a charter of incorporation provided by Governor Lachlan Macquarie. In October 1982 it changed its name to Westpac Banking Corporation following the acquisition of the Commercial Bank of Australia.

To encourage men to increase their engagement in flexible work we have 'reframed' our approach to communicating the benefits of flexible work including:

- Profiling more male role models in all flexibility communications.
- Making it clear in our flexibility communications that flexible work is not limited to formal part-time work (i.e. forms of flexible work often accessed by new mothers) but also includes informal and dynamic work arrangements (i.e. full-time work that is self-managed flexibly) that our male staff are more likely to access.
- Emphasising that there are a range of reasons for requesting flexible work which are valid including care-giving and broader well-being reasons such as sporting leave.
- Promoting Wellbeing initiatives to all employees at all life-stages. These initiatives recognise that wellbeing is affected by a combination of personal and work factors including health, finances, family & community, values, and work. We have recently created the *myWestpacgroup Site* where employees can learn about the many benefits available to them as an employee. Our benefits program has been developed to help our employees create a great future personally and professionally.

Diversity amongst men

Westpac has been market leading in developing a dynamic and accessible 'menu' of flexibility policies, which respond to the needs of men and women in varying life stages and backgrounds. This has played an important part in engaging a broad range of men and women around flexibility. In relation to men and flexibility specifically, our policies aim to address the needs of fathers and care-givers who are gay and heterosexual, men with and without care-giving responsibilities and younger through to older men. Examples of initiatives include:

- *Grandparental Leave* – eligible employees can take up to 52 weeks of grandparental leave to be their grandchild's primary caregiver following the birth or adoption of each baby or multiple births. This can be taken as a single block of leave, multiple blocks, or regular periods of leave each week or month, or in another flexible arrangement as agreed.
- *Eldercare Support* – this comprises of an Eldercare kit for individuals who have the care of an older dependant. The kit enables people to understand the issues and services available to them by providing information when they are considering the current and future needs of an older relative or friend.
- *Sporting Leave* – up to 10 days of paid leave each year is available to employees participating in a sporting event at the state, national or international level. Participation can relate to being a competitor, team manager, coach, umpire or escort for a competitor with a disability.
- *Enhanced Flexibility Options for Male and Female Mature-Aged Employees*, to recognise the unique 'sandwich' caring responsibilities (i.e. child and elder care) and their interest in flexible work as they approach and navigate retirement.
- *Wellbeing Initiatives*. We are in the process of implementing an innovative and dynamic approach to workplace well-being that will go beyond traditional corporate wellness programs. By redefining wellbeing at work to encapture health, finances and career, and how this is supported, wellbeing at Westpac will increase awareness of the factors that shape well being. This will enhance the ability of Westpac's employees to make choices today that secure their well-being into the future.
- *A Broad Suite of Forms of Flexible Work*, including job-sharing, telecommuting, career breaks for up to twelve months, purchased leave for up to eight weeks, part-time employment, working from home and condensed hours.

Fatherhood

Westpac was one of the first publicly listed companies in Australia to provide paid paternity leave in 1998 (and paid maternity leave in 1995). Since then, Westpac's investment in attracting and retaining male and female employees with children has expanded to include a range of dynamic and accessible flexibility policies including tailored parental leave and other innovative policies. Examples of leading policies include:

- *Primary Caregivers* – parental leave benefits are available to both men and women (with no minimum service requirement) based on who is the primary carer and to same-sex and adoptive parents. Eligible employees can take up to two years parental leave, which includes up to 13 weeks of paid parental leave and up to 39 weeks of employer super contributions made during unpaid leave. If both parents work at Westpac, both parents can access paid parental leave at different times when each is the primary caregiver. DCA's recent Member Benchmarking Survey found that only 14% of leading diversity employers provide for parents to each take their own paid parental leave period in this way. Yet, this policy provision is important for engaging men around flexibility as it recognises that men and their partners are increasingly looking for contemporary work-family arrangements, which allow them to exchange primary carer roles through the parental leave period.
- *Non-Primary Caregivers* – an employee who is the non-primary caregiver may utilise a range of leave options to enable the employee to take an unbroken period of up to 8 weeks leave simultaneously with the primary caregiver at the time of birth of the child. In addition, the non-primary carer can access accrued sick leave flexibly – for instance, to accompany a pregnant partner to a pregnancy-related appointment or for carer's leave.
- *Superannuation on Unpaid Parental Leave* – this initiative aims to bridge the savings gap for those taking time out to raise a family. Westpac Group became Australia's first corporation to pay super on unpaid parental leave to female and male permanent employees. We pay up to 39 weeks in super contributions, on top of existing parental leave entitlements of 13 weeks super contributions and 13 weeks full pay. DCA's recent Member Benchmarking Survey found that only 10% of leading diversity employers made employer superannuation contributions to employees on unpaid parental leave.
- *Parental Leave Program* – this is a care program to help working fathers and mothers keep up-to-date with business "happenings" whilst they are on leave and to support their transition back to work. The key features of the program include:
 - The *Working Parents Toolkit* – a booklet offering practical information on preparing for parenthood and support in thinking through return to work.
 - A quarterly *newsletter* keeping male and female employees up-to-date with Westpac Group news and offering career management tips and tools.
 - Access to a *forum* providing working fathers and mothers with support for returning to work after the birth.

Westpac's flexibility communications also regularly feature fathers working flexibly to help challenge 'ideal worker' stereotypes about men and encourage young fathers to consider accessing flexible work options.

Leadership

Our CEO, Gail Kelly, has international recognition for her leadership on gender diversity and flexibility in the Westpac Group. This commitment is providing a number of positive benefits including an increase in awareness of the importance of working flexibly. Our Diversity Survey revealed that the majority of leaders who have implemented flexibility in their team believe it has enhanced team performance and 85% support the continuation of flexibility. Encouragingly, employees working flexibly – either a regular or irregular arrangement – are overall very satisfied with their experience and feel supported by their leaders.

Building on these positive findings, and recognising that the demand for flexible work is expected to increase over the next three years, a key focus for Westpac moving forward is raising leader awareness and flexibility capability. To achieve this, we have:

- A board endorsed strategic focus on diversity and flexibility.
- Hardwiring and softwiring of change through a CEO driven focus.
- The Westpac Group Diversity Council, chaired by the CEO and with her direct reporting executives as members, meets quarterly and is charged with driving the agenda across the Group and championing diversity.
- An on-line Flexibility Toolkit has been launched to support people leaders to enhance their knowledge and build confidence in managing flexibility, understand their obligations and provide step-by-step processes to consider and apply flexible practices within their teams.
- Flexibility Training has been conducted to further refine our HR team and People Leaders flexibility-related practical implementation skills.
- A Flexibility Action Group has been established to generate a strong network for flexible workers at all levels, further normalise flexible work through Westpac and provide a forum for flexible workers to share information and ideas of interest.

New model of success

Westpac is committed to mainstreaming flexibility at all organisational levels to ensure engaging in flexible work is not a barrier to career progression for men or women. To achieve this:

- Our flexibility communications are helping normalise flexible careers, through demonstrating that flexibility can be successfully integrated into senior roles. We are regularly profiling successful men and women who work flexibly. Of particular note are two male direct reports to the CEO who work flexibly (including regular formal and occasional informal flexible work). We have also raised the profile of flexibility through internal news and communication channels including newsroom articles, targeted emails from the CEO, senior executives and People Leaders and blogs.
- As noted above, we have established a Flexibility Action Group to provide a supportive environment for flexible workers and proactively help drive cultural change and normalise flexible work practices throughout the Westpac Group.
- We continue to examine additional policies and changes to further embed flexible work within the organisation, and to enable us to continue to be leaders in mainstreaming flexibility.

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