
11 Characteristics of part time jobs

This Chapter considers what part time jobs are like and how workers view part time work in Australia. It focuses on non-wage characteristics of part time work such as the way work is arranged and whether part time jobs offer lesser conditions or are of a lower quality than full time jobs. Measures of quality include career prospects, conditions and benefits of jobs, the amount of training and measures of job satisfaction.

These research questions have been addressed by several studies of non-wage characteristics of part time jobs. The general findings suggest that part time jobs in general are different from full time jobs, both in Australia (see, for example, Harley and Whitehouse 2000) and in other countries (see, for example, Fagan and Burchell 2002). Fagan and Burchell noted that part time jobs ‘... are typically lower paid, more monotonous and with fewer opportunities for advancement’. However, they also noted that part time work had positive elements including being less demanding and better facilitating social and family commitments.

An exhaustive analysis of job characteristics is beyond the scope of this Chapter. Rather, the analysis here provides an overview of key aspects of part time job characteristics, and seeks to highlight relevant trends. The analysis also considers the influence of several factors which may confound simple comparisons of part time and full time job characteristics, such as the occupational distribution¹ of part time jobs and the influence of casual employment.²

The HILDA database provides information on the characteristics of a person’s main job. As such, the analysis does not address characteristics of secondary part time jobs. This omission may contribute some bias to the analysis, because part time secondary jobs are likely to be of fewer hours per week and may have their own

¹ Jobs are broken down by occupation and skill groups according to the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO). Further details are summarised in box F.1 in Appendix F.

² In the HILDA survey, employed respondents are asked to classify their job according to whether it involves a temporary, casual or permanent contract. As this distinction is made by survey respondents, it may differ from concepts used by the ABS.

distinct job characteristics. However, since multiple job holders are a small minority in the HILDA sample³, the analysis in this Chapter will be representative of the vast majority of part time jobs in the data base.

11.1 What kinds of jobs are part time?

An outline of how part time jobs are distributed according to industry, occupation, and contract type in Australia was provided in section 1.1. Given that part time jobs tend to be located in the lower skilled occupations and involve casual contracts, it is useful to consider in more detail the duties of part time jobs. For instance, whether part time jobs also involve particular tasks and responsibilities, have particular occupations or requirements, or serve particular purposes for workers.

Roles, responsibilities and training

Fagan and Burchell (2002) address several aspects of job quality for part time workers across the European Union. They find that part time workers are less likely to have jobs that involve complex tasks, problem solving or planning responsibilities. They also find that part time workers were less likely to receive training from their employers. Similar trends were found for Australia with regard to training and responsibility at work (Harley and Whitehouse 2000, Whittard 2003).

The HILDA database provides further information regarding the particular roles and responsibilities of part time workers, as well as the skill requirements and training involved in part time jobs. Such information may help further illustrate the place that part time jobs tend to have within the labour market, and within the organisational structures of businesses.

In the HILDA database, differences are apparent between the responsibilities of part time and full time workers. More than half of the full time workers stated that they had at least some supervisory duties, compared to less than a third of part time workers (Appendix F, table F.1). Among part time workers, women were marginally more likely than men to have supervisory duties, while the reverse was true for full time workers.

³ In the HILDA database, approximately 9.2 per cent of the 2005 workforce held multiple jobs. This represents 11.3 per cent of part time respondents and 8.1 per cent of full time respondents.

Respondents to the HILDA survey also described their work responsibilities by either agreeing or disagreeing with descriptive statements regarding their jobs. That is, respondents gave ratings from 1, where they ‘strongly disagreed’ with the statement, up to 7, where they ‘strongly agreed’ with it. The average ratings for some of these variables are given in figure 11.1, with further results in table F.2 in Appendix F.

Figure 11.1 shows that full time employees were marginally more likely to feel that they had ‘a lot of say about what happens’ in their job. This supports the idea that part time employees are, on average, less influential in their jobs compared to full time employees. Other variables showed that on average, part time employees were less likely to feel that their job required the learning of ‘new skills’, or that it ‘used many of [their] current skills’. More generally, part time workers were less likely to say that their ‘job was difficult’.

These findings are consistent with the observation that part time workers are less likely to undertake training as part of their job. In the HILDA database, 31 per cent of part time employees had taken part in training or education as part of their jobs in 2005, compared to 46 per cent of full time employees. Among part time workers, around 33 per cent of women and 26 per cent of men had undertaken some training in the last 12 months.

Figure 11.1 Employees’ assessments of their own roles and responsibilities, 2005

Average rating, where one means ‘strongly disagree’ and seven means ‘strongly agree’



Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

The HILDA data indicate that part time employees who receive training are more likely to receive basic training. That is, 18 per cent of training for part time workers was related to starting a new job, compared to 9 per cent for full time workers. Full time workers were more likely than part time workers to have training geared towards future jobs or promotion (31 per cent and 21 per cent respectively), or towards improving skills related to their current jobs (72 per cent and 67 per cent respectively).

11.2 Work scheduling

Part time and full time jobs necessarily differ in terms of the number of hours worked, but another important aspect is when that work occurs. The issue of work scheduling includes the number of days per week that are worked, the times of day at which work occurs, and the regularity of work shifts. There are considerable differences between full and part time workers concerning when and how their work is scheduled.

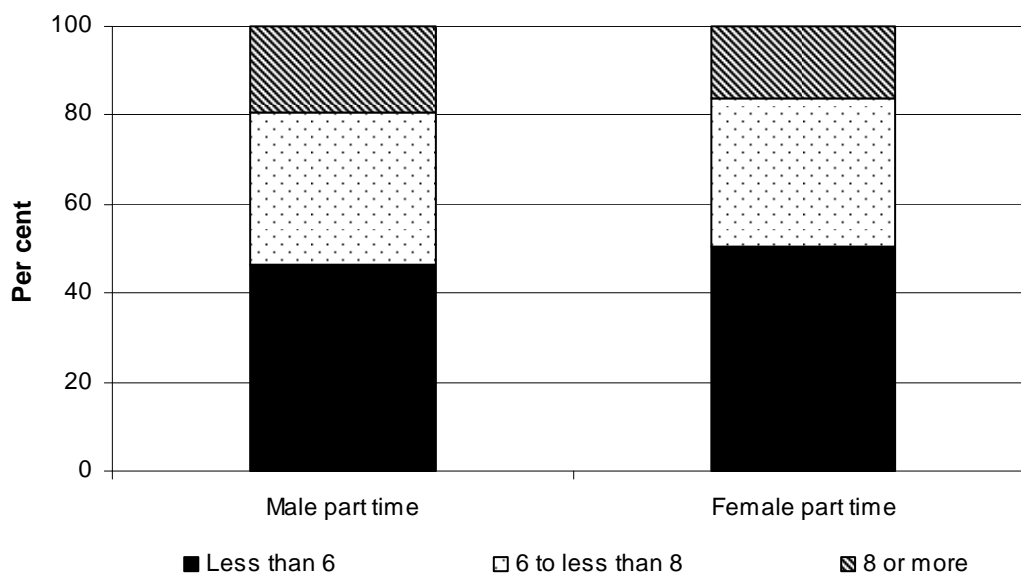
The importance of work scheduling again relates to the use of part time work as a means of achieving flexibility for both employees and employers. Section 5.2 outlines the most common reasons why people take up part time work. These included undertaking education and training and various caring responsibilities. An important question that follows is what kinds of work schedules are adopted by part time workers in order to undertake non-work activities and responsibilities.

Hours per day, days per week

Part time employment involves working fewer than 35 hours per week and, as such, people who are employed part time either work fewer days each week than full time workers, or fewer hours per day than full time workers, or both. It is possible to examine the use of work schedules in the HILDA dataset to review the nature of part time employment arrangements, but only for workers who work regular days each week.

Just under 50 per cent of part time workers worked less than 6 hours per day in their main job in 2005, with nearly 20 per cent working 8 or more hours per day (figure 11.2). There were only small differences in the distribution of hours being worked between the sexes, with men being slightly more likely to work longer hours.

Figure 11.2 Average hours a day worked, 2005
Per cent of workers working given range of hours^a



^a Average hours per day calculated by dividing hours per week worked in main job by days worked per week in main job for people working regular days each week.

Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Regular or irregular days of the week

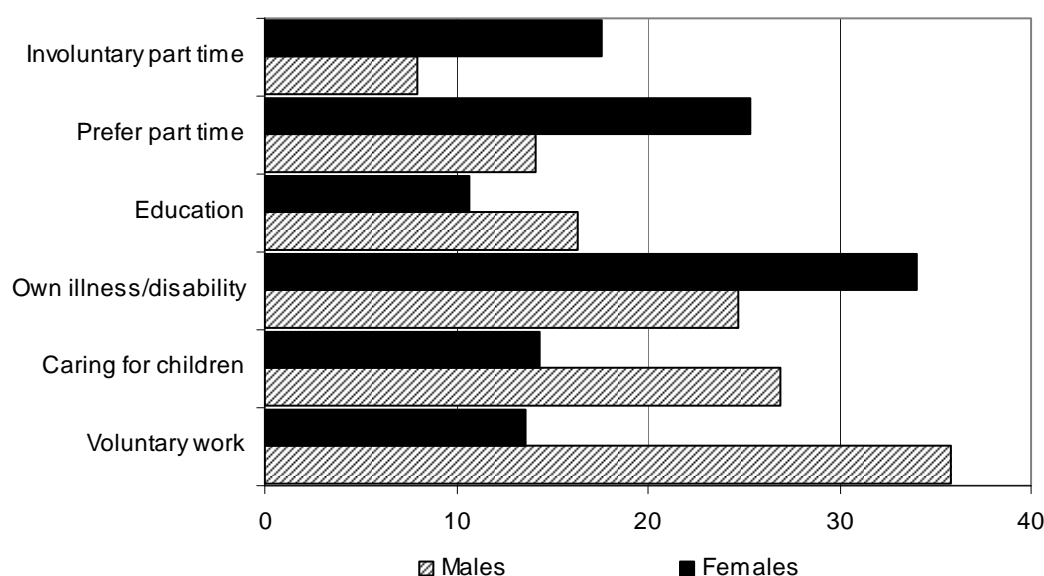
Based on 2005 HILDA data, 20 per cent of part time workers and 10 per cent of full time workers did not have a fixed set of days that they worked each week. There is no clear reason for this difference. For instance, the difference may be expected to reflect the high proportion of casual employees in part time work. However, a similar proportion of casual and permanent part time workers had days of the week which varied (21 and 20 per cent respectively).

The higher rate of irregular work among part time employees may also be expected to reflect the fact that the majority of regular full time work (64.1 per cent) was organised on the traditional Monday to Friday schedule. Therefore, it might seem that full time work tends to be subject to less variability. However, most part time workers do not differ greatly from the traditional work schedule in this sense. About 74 per cent of regular part time work was organised into daytime, weekday shifts, with either fewer days per week or fewer hours per day than full time schedules.

Among part time workers, the incidence of irregular work schedules does not appear to be influenced by some of the more obvious factors related to labour supply. That is, the issue of work scheduling is likely to be particularly important

for people with child caring responsibilities and people combining education and work. These are the groups that may be expected to have the lowest proportion of irregular work days. However, part time workers with family and education commitments are not more likely than people working part time for other reasons to work a standard set of days each week (figure 11.3).

Figure 11.3 Part time workers without set work days, 2005
Per cent of part time workers — main reason for working part time



Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

With regard to the number of days worked per week, 97 per cent of the full time workers who had regular weekly rosters worked 5 to 7 days (table 11.1). Understandably, there is more variation in the number of days worked by part time workers. While the majority of part time workers worked less than 5 days a week, a sizeable proportion worked shorter hours across many days of the week. In fact, 35 per cent of part time workers with regular weekly rosters actually work 5 or more days a week.

Prevalence of weekend and weeknight shifts

Another aspect revealed in the HILDA work schedules data is the prevalence of weekend or night work. A slightly higher proportion of part time workers work on Saturday or Sunday than full time workers (figure 11.4), although most do not work on weekends. Also, even though a higher proportion of part timers work regular night shifts, this represents only a small proportion of part time workers (8 per cent in 2005). Night work appears to be associated with casual employment regardless of whether this is part or full time employment.

Table 11.1 Days worked per week, 2005

Per cent of full time and part time workers by number of days per week worked^a

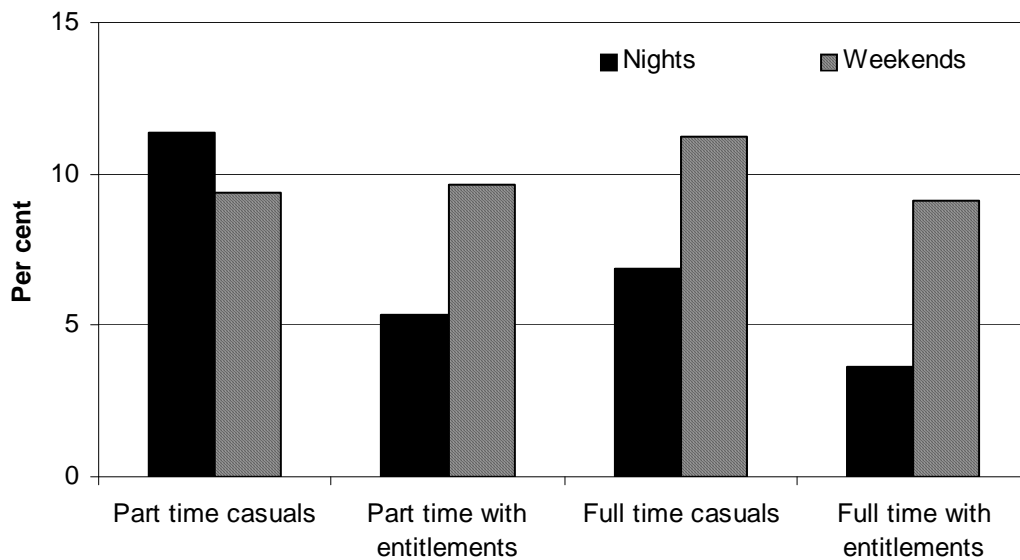
	<i>Days worked per week</i>			
	<i>1 to 3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6 or 7</i>
<i>Full time</i>				
Men	1	2	71	26
Women	2	4	82	12
Total	1	2	75	22
<i>Part time</i>				
Men	44	12	36	8
Women	48	20	28	4
Total	47	18	30	5

^a Days a week worked in main job by people who have set days a week for work.

Source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Figure 11.4 Proportion of full and part time staff working weekends or nights, 2005^a

Per cent of full time and part time workers by employment status



^a People who regularly work weekends or nights in their main job as a per cent of all employees.

Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Travel time

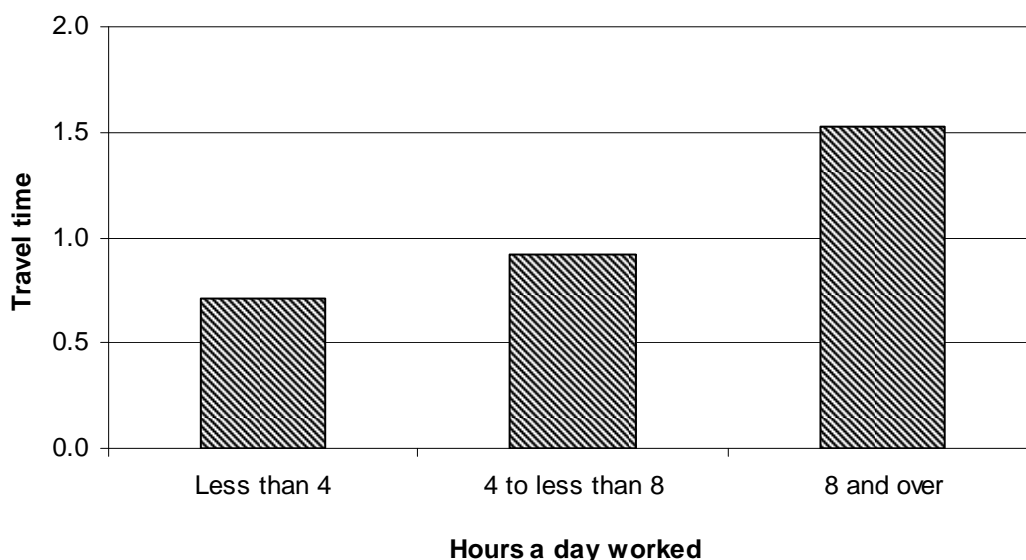
Travel time can be a particularly important aspect of the way work is scheduled in a worker's life. Cogan (1981) notes that the time taken to travel to and from work is akin to a fixed cost of labour force participation, as it does not vary by the number of hours worked per shift. In this way, it is likely to affect workers' preferences for particular jobs and for particular work arrangements.

In relation to part time workers, for a given wage rate, each shift will need to be of a sufficient length to offset the travel cost. As the distance travelled increases, travel costs rise both in terms of out of pocket expenses and the opportunity cost of travel time. Therefore, people with shorter commutes should be more willing to work shorter hours. The travel time to and from work is likely to influence both people's preference for part time work as well as their preference of work schedule.

For respondents to the HILDA survey who worked regular weekly rosters in 2005, it is possible to calculate the average travel time among part time workers and to compare it to the number of hours worked each day (figure 11.5). As expected, the average daily travel time for people working less than 4 hours a day is substantially lower than people working 8 or more hours per day.

Figure 11.5 Average daily travel time for part time workers by daily work hours,^a 2005

Hours per day spent travelling for persons working given hours per day



^a Average daily travel time calculated by dividing weekly travel time by days worked per week in main job for people working regular days each week.

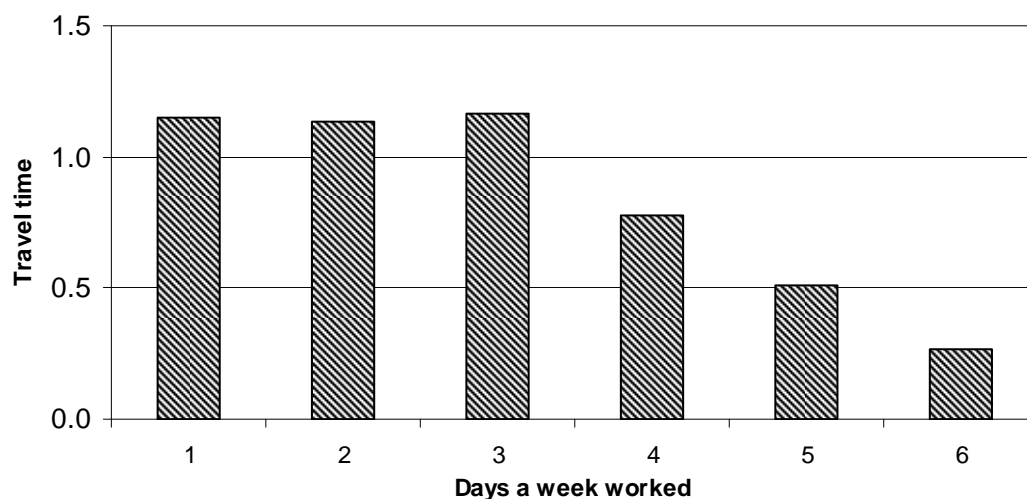
Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

People working part time who work on average 8 or more hours per day must be working 4 or less days a week, or they would exceed the 35 hour classification threshold for part time work. As such, we would also expect to see the highest average travel times to be associated with part time workers who work the least days each week. Conversely, part time workers who work most days will typically only work a small number of hours each day — and this group would be expected to have the lowest average travel time. HILDA data confirm the expected distribution of travel times by average number of days worked a week (figure 11.6).

For people considering working part time, the pattern of hours and days per week available may influence their choice. In particular, part time workers will be more likely to accept short hours on multiple days if the location of the work is near their home, but are more likely to want longer hours on fewer days if the work entails longer travel times — provided that the hours allow them to fulfil their non-work commitments. Thus, the cost of the job commute should be seen as an important issue affecting potential workers willingness to take up part time work.

Figure 11.6 Average daily travel time for part time workers by days worked per week,^a 2005

Hours per day spent travelling for persons working a given number of days per week



^a Average daily travel time calculated by dividing weekly travel time by days worked per week in main job for people working regular days each week.

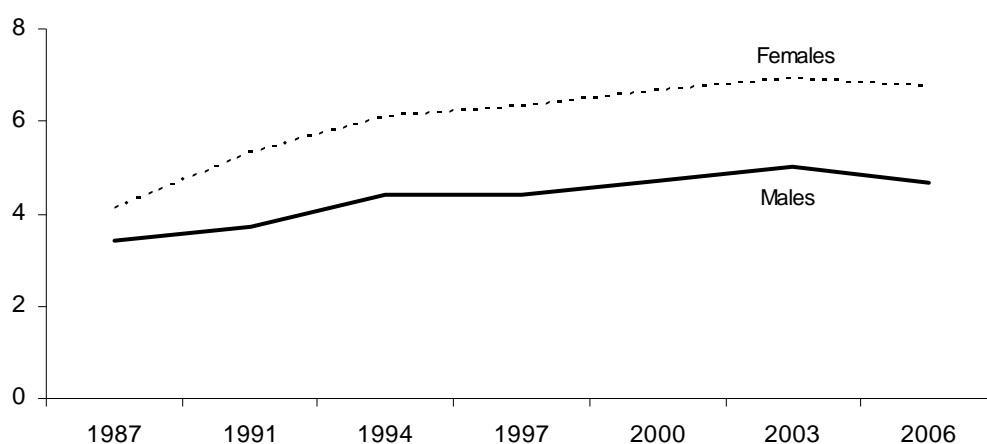
Data sources: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Multiple job holding

A further extension of work scheduling relates to how some people may fit more than one job into their working week. Around 8 per cent of part time workers are working two or more jobs simultaneously (ABS 2007 unpublished data). In addition, around six per cent of the workforce hold more than one job, typically with at least one job on a part time basis (figure 11.7). As such, it is likely that over 20 per cent of part time jobs are worked in conjunction with another job.⁴

Figure 11.7 **Scale of multiple job holding, 1987–2006**

Per cent of workers who hold multiple jobs by gender

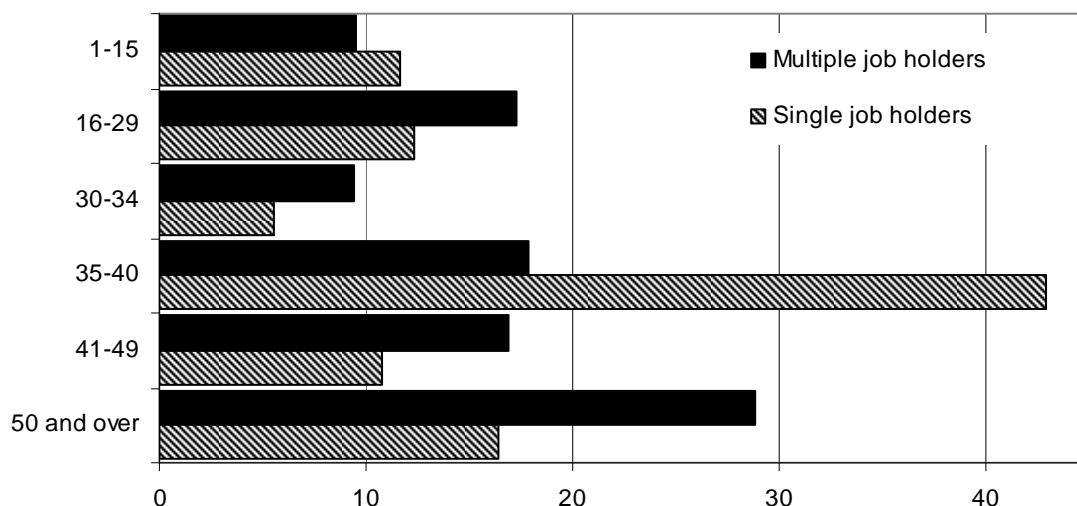


Data source: ABS (*Multiple jobholding Australia*, Cat. no. 6216.0); ABS (*2007 unpublished data [data available on request]*).

There is a gender disparity in multiple job holding. As with part time work, multiple job holding is more common among women, who account for 60 per cent of multiple job holders in 2006 (ABS 2007 unpublished data). Similarly, the hours of work also varies substantially for multiple job holders. While multiple job holders are more likely to be working part time than people who work one job, multiple job holders are almost twice as likely to work 50 or more hours a week (figure 11.8).

⁴ Unpublished data from the ABS (2007) shows that there were 2 858 000 part time workers with only one job and 360 000 full time workers and 206 000 part time workers holding multiple jobs in August 2006. Hypothetically, if the full time workers with multiple jobs held one part time job and one full time job, and the part time multiple job holders held two part time jobs, then there would be $360\,000 + 2 * 206\,000 = 772\,000$ part time jobs held by multiple job holders and $2\,858\,000 + 772\,000 = 3.6$ million part time jobs, that is 21.4 per cent ($772\,000/3.6$ million) of part time jobs that are worked in combination with another job. If multiple job holders held more than two jobs or if full time multiple job holders held multiple part time jobs, this percentage would be higher.

Figure 11.8 **Weekly hours of work by multiple and single job holders, 2006**
Per cent of job holders by total hours worked in a week



Data source: ABS 2007 unpublished data [data available on request].

11.3 Geographic distribution of part time jobs

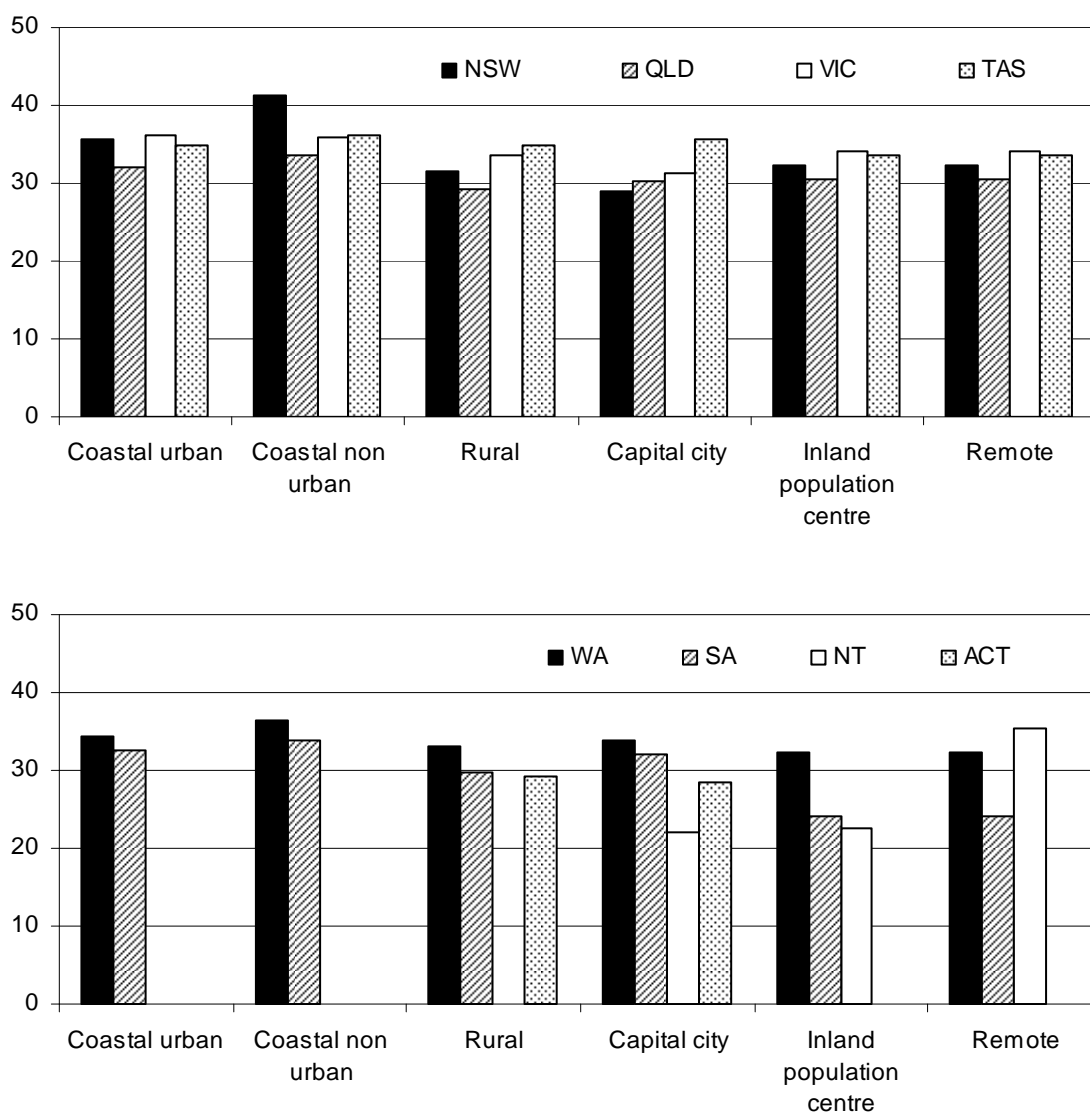
The location of part time jobs is likely to be influenced by the relative location of industries with high and low rates of part time work as well as the age distribution of people living in different regions.

The impact of the geographic distribution of industries on the spatial concentration of part time work depends on the share of part time work in different industries and the share of employment by industry in each region. Data recently released as part of the 2006 ABS census of population provides a basis for examining the prevalence of part time work based on where people live. As such, it does not directly identify the location of part time jobs, but by using broad geographic categories, it is likely that most people will live and work in the same region.

ABS Census data was aggregated into six geographic groups for each state and territory — capital city, coastal urban, inland population centre, coastal non urban, rural and remote. From figure 11.9, it is clear that most of these geographic areas have similar rates of part time work — between 30 and 35 per cent of those employed.

Figure 11.9 Rate of part time work by geographic category^a

Part time workers as per cent of workers in that area



^a Each ABS Statistical Local Area was allocated to a geographic category by the Productivity Commission⁵. Not all geographic categories are present for each jurisdiction.

Data source: ABS (2007 Basic Community Profile DataPack Release 2.1, Cat. no. 2069.0.30.001).

⁵ Coastal urban and inland population centres were selected from ABS statistical local areas that had the title 'City' or 'Rural City' in their name. In this case, 'City' or 'Rural City' typically is the type of local government authority. When the boundary of the local government area extends beyond a statistical local area, only the urban section (part A) was included. Urban areas with less than 12 000 people were not included in coastal urban or inland population centres. With the exception of remote parts of Tasmania, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory, any local government area adjoining the coastline will be defined as either coastal urban or coastal non urban. Remote areas include unincorporated areas, indigenous communities, offshore islands and some areas with population densities of 1 person per 10 square kilometres or less.

Across the country, the highest rates of part time work are in coastal urban centres – excluding capital cities – (34 per cent) and non urban coastal areas (32 per cent) with the lowest rates of part time work in remote areas (29 per cent).

Urban and non urban coastal areas tend to have a high share of hospitality and tourism activity which is a major employer of part time workers. The rate of part time work in non urban coastal areas is particularly high in New South Wales (41 per cent).

For remote areas, the rate of part time work in South Australia is very low (24 per cent) and very high in the Northern Territory (35 per cent). The predominance of mining and agriculture in remote parts of Australia and the relatively low rate of part time work would appear to be consistent. Two factors that may be contributing to the high rate of part time work in remote parts of the Northern Territory are the presence of a substantial tourism and hospitality industry and the relatively large contribution of young people to the regions age distribution. This very high rate of part time work in the remote part of the Northern Territory is in stark contrast to Darwin, where only 22 per cent of those in work are working part time.

11.4 Benefits and entitlements

Many work benefits in Australia are set out in Awards and other legislation. Chapter 4 gave an outline of the legislative framework regarding part time work and its evolution in recent years. According to most Awards a permanent part time worker in Australia receives similar (pro rata) benefits as a full time worker in the same job.

However, given the differing working arrangements with part time and full time workers there are differences in their access to benefits in aggregate. Casual working arrangements do not provide many of the benefits of permanent employment, for example paid sick and holiday leave. As casual working arrangements are more likely to apply to part time workers than full time workers, part time workers in aggregate will receive fewer non-wage benefits as full time employees.

Moreover, it has been possible since the mid 1990s under bargaining arrangements involving the ‘No Disadvantage Test’ in the Federal jurisdiction to forego some benefits as long as the global level of remuneration is not reduced. It is not clear whether market forces themselves tend to encourage different access to benefits for part time workers compared to full time workers. This would depend on how different employers and employees value flexibility and conditions, and whether or

not bargaining would be systematically different when involving part time and full time workers.

There are several factors that are likely to influence part time workers' benefits. For instance, employers' preferences for flexible employment are likely to differ with regard to different occupations. And workers who prefer part time hours may also be drawn to particular occupations, and may prioritise their benefits in a particular way (Hakim 2003). In order to control for these confounding influences, it is useful to ascertain whether part time workers' benefits differ from those of full time workers in specific occupation groups and contract types.

Part time work and benefits

Two of the most common benefits in Australia are paid holiday and sick leave. The HILDA database shows that the vast majority of full time workers received paid holiday and sick leave in 2005 (table 11.2). The HILDA data also show a stark difference in the access to holiday and sick pay of part time and full time workers.

In ABS labour force surveys, access to paid holiday and sick leave are used as a proxy for casual employment. The classification of casuals in the HILDA database relies on self assessment, although this method also finds very few casual workers with access to paid leave (table F.3 in Appendix F). The vast majority of people employed on ongoing or permanent contracts had access to these benefits. For casual workers, around 3 per cent of part time employees and 10 percent of full time employees had access to these benefits. And while part time employees are less likely to receive holiday or sick pay within each contract type, this does not fully explain the aggregate differences between part time and full time workers. Rather, these appear to reflect the differing significance of casual employment between full and part time employees.

The effect of part time work on the access to paid leave differs from its effect on the access to other benefits. The HILDA dataset provides information on several other work benefits for 2005 (table 11.2). Firstly, *home-based work*, *child care provisions*, and *flexible start and finish times* represent ongoing arrangements to provide flexibility in organising work time. Such arrangements would be likely to appeal to people who choose part time hours in order to balance other responsibilities. Table 11.2 shows that in 2005, part time workers were marginally more likely than full time workers to have access to *flexible start and finish times*, and almost as likely as full time employees to have access to *home-based work* or *child care provisions*.

Table 11.2 Work entitlements for part time and full time workers, 2005^a

Per cent of part time and full time workers

	<i>Part time</i>	<i>Full time</i>
	<i>Has access</i>	<i>Has access</i>
	%	%
Paid holiday leave ^b	37.4	89.2
Paid sick leave ^b	37.4	89.4
Maternity leave — paid ^c	42.9	67.1
Maternity leave — unpaid ^c	68.0	88.4
Parental leave	53.6	81.7
Special carer's leave	60.7	84.1
Home-based work	15.0	23.7
Flexible start and finish times	54.9	54.3
Child care facility or subsidy	9.6	10.9

^a Figures are calculated using cross-sectional weights. ^b Figures are for employees only. ^c Figures are for women only.

Data Source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Casual part time workers were the most likely to have flexible start and finish times (table F.3 in Appendix F). They were also just as likely as full time casuals to have access to home-based work. The access to these entitlements among part time compared to full time workers is mainly due to the high rate of casual employment among part time workers.

A complicating factor for comparisons of part time and full time workers is that they differ in their distributions across the occupational and skill groups. The Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) classifies jobs into nine occupational groups and five different skill levels (box F.1 in Appendix F). The skill levels range from one (the highest) to five (the lowest), and are based on the average entry level qualifications to each occupation. Generally, non-wage benefits such as holiday and sick pay are more common among higher skill levels (table F.4 in Appendix F). Such benefits also tend to be more common among full time workers than part time workers at each skill level.⁶

Access to home based work and flexible start and finish times appeared to be related to occupational groups. Figure 11.10 shows that full time workers at higher skill levels were more likely to have access to home-based work, child care provisions and flexible work times than other full time employees. Whereas for part time workers, these benefits were most common at the middle skill levels. Further,

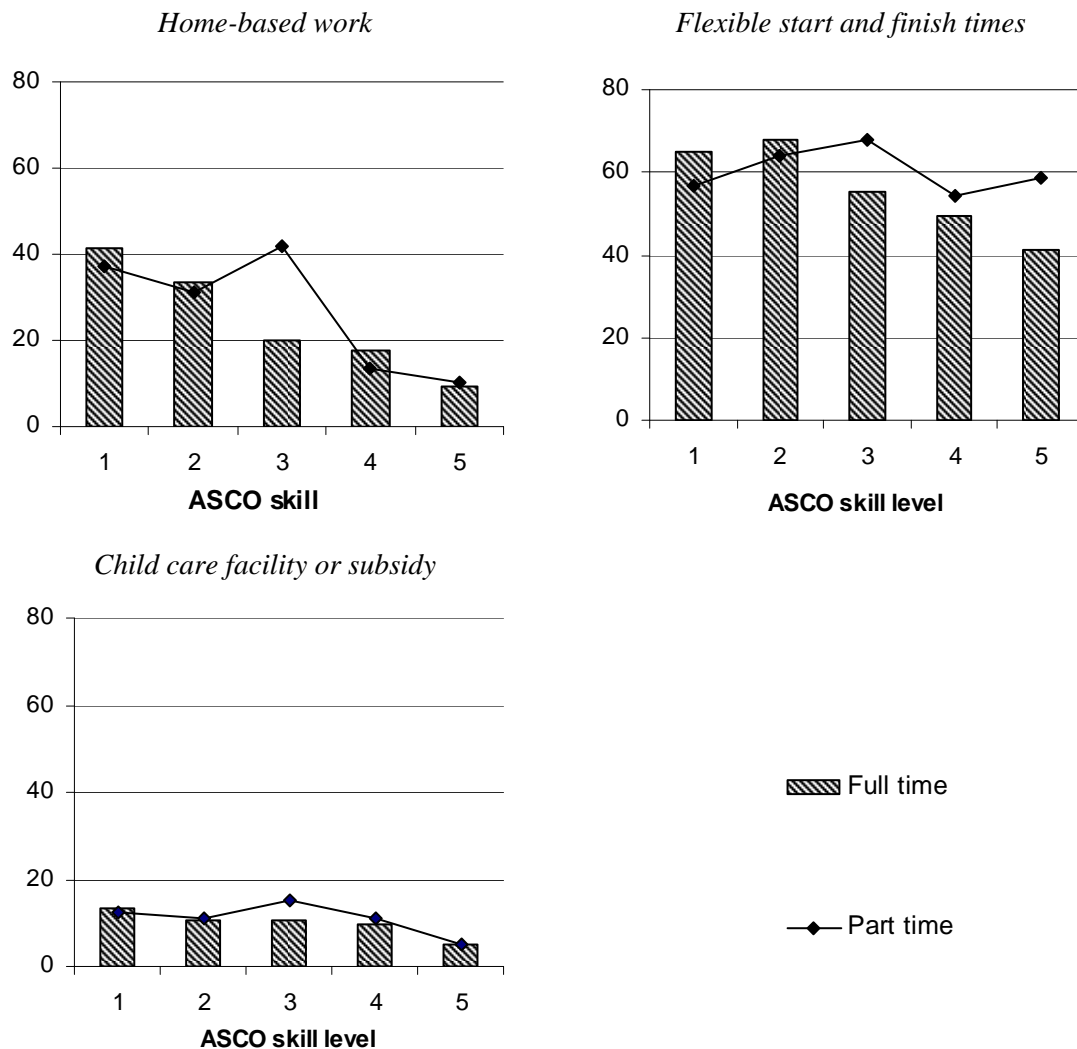
⁶ With the exception of permanent part time work, which is more commonly available for part time workers than for full time.

the results show that for these benefits, comparisons between part time and full time workers varied according to the occupational group.

There is evidence that benefits and entitlements are specific to the occupational group or skill level. For instance, part time employees who work as tradespersons have a particularly low probability of receiving sick and holiday pay compared to other employees. And part time workers are more likely than full time workers to have flexible start and finish times only for occupations in the lower three skill levels.

Figure 11.10 Access to benefits by ASCO skill level, 2005^a

Per cent of full time and part time workers



^a The skill levels given by the Australian Standard Classification of Occupations (ASCO) are outlined in box F.1 in Appendix F. Skill level 1 includes *Managers and Administrators* and *Professionals*. Skill level 2 includes *Associate Professionals*. Skill level 3 includes *Tradespersons and Related Workers* and *Advanced Clerical and Service Workers*. Skill level 4 includes *Intermediate Clerical, Sales and Service Workers* and *Intermediate Production and Transport Workers*. Skill level 5 includes *Elementary Clerical, Sales and Service Workers* and *Labourers and Related Workers*.

Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

11.5 Part time work and career prospects

The impact of part time jobs on career progression is often cited as an aspect of concern (Industrial Relations Victoria 2005). Most research agrees that promotion and career advancement are slower for part time workers than for full time workers (see, for example, Whittard 2003; Hakim 2003), although explanations for the differences vary. Hakim hypothesises that people without a career focus are more likely to choose occupations with limited responsibility and promotion prospects. Conversely, Whittard shows that in some workplaces, the employers treat part time and full time employees differently with regard to training and advancement. Also, if promotion and career progression depend at least in part on work experience, it would be expected that long term part time workers would have slower career progression and promotion as a result of fewer contact hours in employment.

Two surveys have been used in Australia to measure aspects of career progression. As part of the *Career Experience* publication, the ABS publishes information on people who have been with the same employer for at least 12 months and who have been promoted, or have been given increased responsibility or extra duties in the proceeding year — with the most recent data available for 2002. The HILDA database asks all employed people in the survey if they have been promoted in the last year, with data available each year from 2001-2005.

Part time work and promotions

The HILDA data (table 11.3) clearly demonstrates two key patterns. First, that the probability of being promoted is much lower for older workers than for younger workers — with promotions for workers aged 55 years and over being very infrequent. Second, within each age group, the rate of promotions among part time workers is much lower than among full time workers. While women in this survey tended to have a slightly higher rate of promotions than men, this difference is much smaller than either the distinction between full time and part time workers or between different age groups.

Table 11.3 Promotions among full time and part time workers, 2002–05

Per cent of workers in age, gender and work type group who were promoted in the previous 12 months

Sex	Status	Year	15–24	25–54	55+
Men					
	Part time	2002	7.8	3.4	1.2
	Part time	2003	7.8	1.6	1.4
	Part time	2004	7.0	2.8	1.1
	Part time	2005	8.5	4.6	1.4
	Full time	2002	14.0	12.0	2.8
	Full time	2003	18.0	11.0	3.6
	Full time	2004	16.0	11.0	3.8
	Full time	2005	23.0	12.0	2.2
Women					
	Part time	2002	6.5	3.6	1.8
	Part time	2003	7.2	3.8	2.4
	Part time	2004	7.4	3.9	0.0
	Part time	2005	7.0	2.7	0.3
	Full time	2002	18.0	13.0	6.4
	Full time	2003	17.0	13.0	3.2
	Full time	2004	19.0	15.0	2.1
	Full time	2005	23.0	12.0	7.0

Source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

The survey collections by the ABS (figure 11.11) show a similar pattern to the HILDA data, with promotions among full time workers being much higher than part time workers, and with women having slightly higher rates of promotion than men. Generally, the rate of promotions observed by the ABS is much lower than identified in the HILDA analysis, but the difference in rate of promotion between full and part time workers is observable in each survey. The two main differences between the methodologies used in the two surveys are that:

- the ABS only asked workers who had been with the same employer for at least 12 months if they had been promoted, while the HILDA questionnaire asked all workers about promotions; and
- the HILDA questionnaire provided no guidance on what constituted a promotion, while the ABS survey defined a promotion as higher salary plus additional or more complex duties (ABS 2003b).

Figure 11.11 Promotion among full time and part time workers, 1996–2002^a
Per cent of workers who were promoted in the previous year



^a Only workers who have been working for the same employer for at least 12 months were included in this survey.

Data source: ABS (*Career Experience*, Cat. no. 6254.0).

The marked differences in the rates of promotion achieved by full time and part time workers clearly indicates that working part time has an impact on at least one aspect of career progression. However, questions remain as to whether episodes of part time work or the duration of part time work may have an on going impact on a person's promotion prospects over time, even if they subsequently work full time.

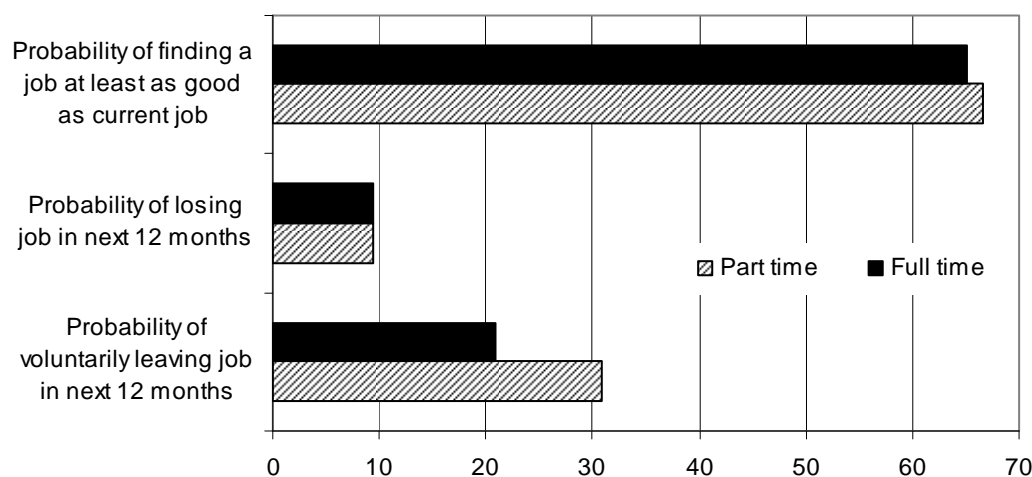
Immediate job prospects

Data on promotions give an indication of the career prospects that people may have in their current jobs. A separate aspect of career prospects relates to people leaving their jobs. In considering how permanent or transient part time work may be, Chapter 4 analysed gross employment flows data from the ABS, and outlined the likelihood of movements between part time and full time employment and non-employment. However, this data considered movements between different labour force states, and not necessarily between different jobs or whether the movements were voluntary or not. The HILDA survey allows a further investigation of this area, particularly regarding people's decisions and expectations regarding their jobs.

The HILDA survey provides information on employees' perceptions of whether they expect to leave their job within the next year, and whether they expect to lose their job within the next year. Figure 11.12 shows that part time and full time workers had similar views on the probability of losing their job in the next 12 months. However, part time employees had more of an expectation than full time employees that they would leave their job voluntarily within the next year.

The HILDA database also provides information on how employees describe their own prospects of finding a new job. Figure 11.12 shows that, on average, part time and full time employees had similar views of the likelihood that they could find another job at least as good as their current job.

Figure 11.12 Employees' own assessments of immediate job prospects, 2005
Average percentage probabilities



Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Further investigation of the data reveals that people's expectations of their immediate job prospects vary by age (table F.5 in Appendix F). Specifically, people between the ages of 15–35 years were more likely on average to expect that they would leave their job voluntarily in the next year. At these ages, part time workers were particularly more likely to leave their jobs. The highest average probabilities of resignation were between the ages 20–24 years, where 62 per cent of part time workers and 32 per cent of full time workers expected to leave their jobs in the next year. This is in line with the finding that part time workers aged between 15–30 years were marginally more optimistic about finding a new job that was as good as their current job.

11.6 Life impact and job satisfaction

The effect that jobs have on workers' lives has been a central issue to the study of part time work, given that access to part time work is often included in the suite of 'family friendly work practices' both in the literature (Gray and Tudball 2002) and in determinations (AIRC 2005). An improved understanding of labour supply decisions related to part time work can be obtained by measuring the impact that part time work has on workers. Such measurements provide an indication of whether part time workers' needs or expectations are being met.

The impact of a job on a worker's life may, for example, include whether the job is stressful, or how workers may perceive their own work/life balance. Similar aspects of job quality can also be measured in terms of job satisfaction, as expressed by the employees themselves. However, job satisfaction also carries the further meaning of whether employees are themselves happy with the quality of their jobs.

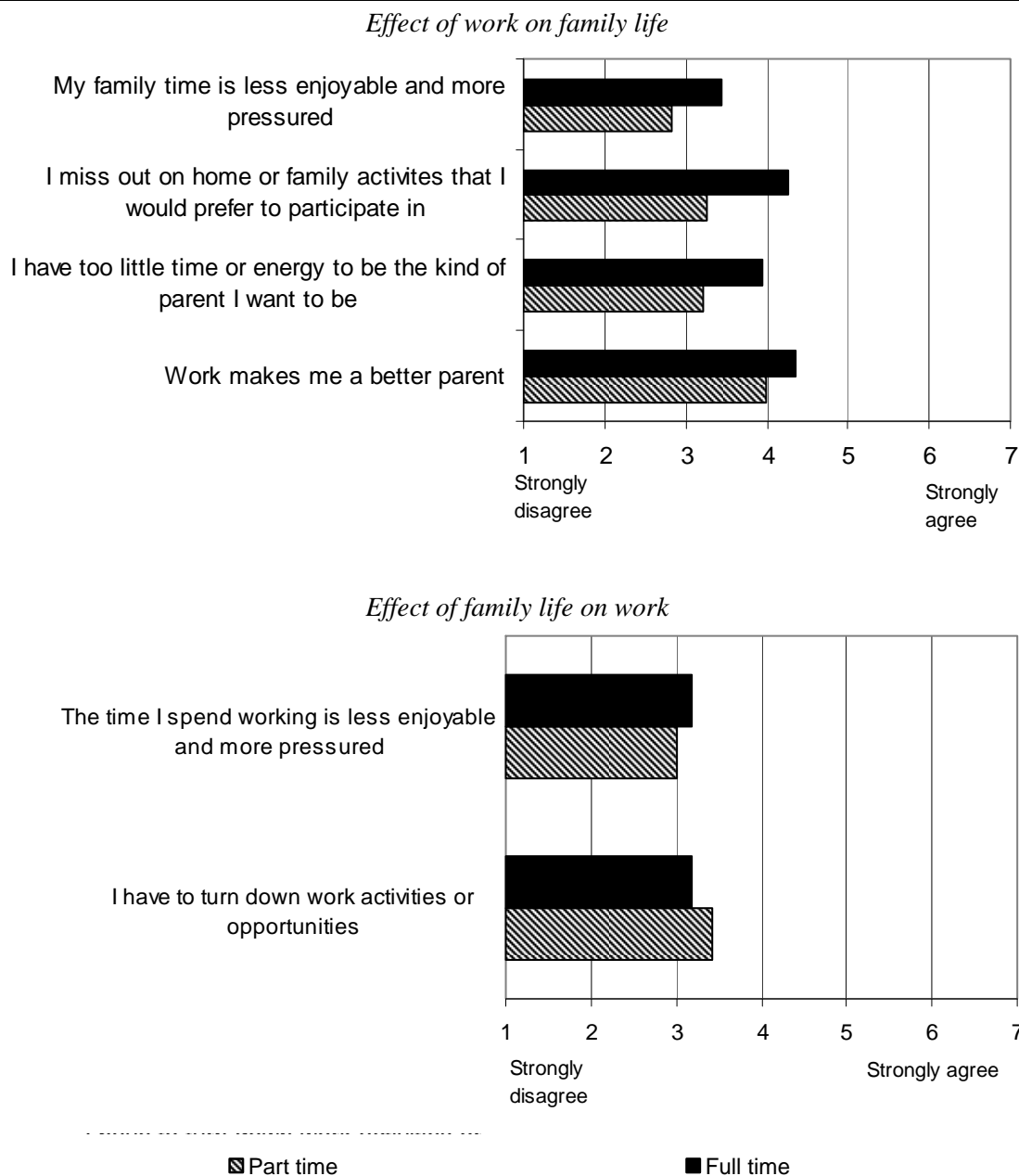
Work conditions as life impact

Chapter 5 outlined some of the main reasons why people worked part time. Some significant populations had cited non-work responsibilities, some of which involved family commitments. A further question relates to how well employees' needs or expectations are being met by part time jobs. The HILDA database provides information on the interaction between work and people's lives away from work, particularly regarding the interaction between part time work and family life.

The impact of a job on a worker's life comprises both the impact that occurs while the worker is at work, and the impact on the worker away from work. Firstly, respondents to the HILDA survey were asked to rate the stress involved in their jobs (table F.2 in Appendix F). The data indicates that stress levels were only marginally lower for part time employees. But both full time and part time employees felt it unlikely that the severity of their stress could 'cause physical illness'.

Secondly, the HILDA database also contains information regarding the relationship between work and family life. Respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement with some descriptive statements on this topic. Figure 11.13 shows the average ratings from one to seven. The answers to all questions by part time and full time workers displayed only what can be considered mild disagreement to mild agreement, given the answers fell within the range 2.5 to 4.5. But full time workers were more likely to agree that their parenting was affected by the time and energy spent at work. They were also more likely to agree that they miss out on family activities due to work, or to agree that their family time was less enjoyable and more pressured because of work. Part time and full time employees both provided a neutral response, on average, regarding whether they were better parents because they worked.

Figure 11.13 Employees' own assessment of work life balance, 2005^a



^a Ratings are on a discrete scale where one means 'strongly disagree' and seven means 'strongly agree'. Only includes working parents.

Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

Satisfaction and part time jobs

The issue of work satisfaction has been examined by various theoretical and empirical economic studies (see, for example, Long 2005). Long notes that two fundamental questions underlying such empirical analyses relate to whether satisfaction ratings are comparable across individuals, and whether the ratings can be meaningfully interpreted. These questions have not been answered definitively. However, Long notes several studies that have found satisfaction ratings to be consistent with personal attributes such as age and gender, and that satisfaction has been linked to behaviours such as absenteeism and resignations.

A further question relates to how satisfaction variables may be useful in the present analysis of part time jobs. Job satisfaction itself has been included as an indicator of job quality (Commission of the European Communities 2001), although some studies make the distinction between job quality and satisfaction (Watson 2004). For the purposes of this section, job satisfaction is treated as giving some subjective indication of job quality. This imperfect indicator reflects the extent to which workers' various needs and wants are fulfilled by their jobs. Put simply, people want different things from their jobs.

There has been some evidence that satisfaction ratings differ for part time and full time workers in Australia. Using data from the 1995 Australian Workplace Industrial Relations Survey (AWIRS), Morehead et al. (1997) found that part time workers were marginally more likely to be satisfied with their job. And using the HILDA survey, Booth and van Ours (2005) found that women who worked part time were happier with their work hours than women who worked full time.

Wooden, Warren and Drago (2007) also used HILDA data to investigate the effect of working hours on satisfaction, but they focused on the effect of working hours mismatches. That is, they found that job and life satisfaction were significantly related to mismatches between actual and preferred working hours. For instance, part time workers who preferred more hours had significantly lower ratings of overall job satisfaction than other part time workers. These effects were evident after accounting for age, gender, disability, family type and household income.

Are part time workers more satisfied?

The present analysis investigates worker satisfaction relating to various job characteristics. Respondents to the HILDA survey are asked to rate their satisfaction from zero (lowest satisfaction) to ten (highest satisfaction). Figure 11.14 shows the average satisfaction ratings given by part time and full time workers for various job aspects. On average, part time and full time employees rated their satisfaction with pay at just below seven out of ten, while their overall job satisfaction was between

seven and eight out of ten. Across each aspect, part time ratings of satisfaction were similar to those of full time workers. Only with regard to working hours and flexibility were there noticeable differences between the satisfaction levels of part time and full time workers — part time workers reporting marginally greater satisfaction in this regard.

The data shows few differences in job satisfaction between genders (table F.6 in Appendix F). Women were considerably more likely to express contentment with the working hours and flexibility associated with part time work.

Figure 11.14 Job satisfaction for part time and full time employees, 2005^a
Average satisfaction rating



^a Averages calculated using cross-sectional weights.

Data source: HILDA 2007 Release 5.1 (weighted data).

There was some variation of satisfaction with age (table F.7 in Appendix F). For age groups between 25–54, the average pay satisfaction of part time workers tended to be similar or slightly lower than that of full time workers. But for younger and older age groups, the pay satisfaction for part time workers was marginally higher than that of full time workers. A similar trend appears with job security, where satisfaction tended to be lower at prime ages for part time workers, and more similar between part time and full time workers for other age groups.

The effect of age on pay and security satisfaction may reflect different work priorities across the life cycle. That is, factors such as wealth and career building may be assigned different priorities according to different career stages or life stages. Alternatively, there may also be important interactions between age and other job characteristics.

Part time employees in all age groups above 30 years were more satisfied with their work hours than their full time counterparts. Generally, part time employees appeared to be increasingly satisfied with their work hours at older ages. This may also be evidence of changing priorities throughout the life-cycle.

Respondents' satisfaction with the nature of their work also differed between age groups. This may reflect differing attitudes towards work, or perhaps different career stages. Full time workers were relatively more satisfied with the work they did from ages 15–40 years. For ages 60 years and over, part time workers were more satisfied than full time workers.

Other factors influencing job satisfaction

The HILDA data for 2005 shows that contract type has some effect on some aspects of job satisfaction for both part time and full time workers (table F.8 in Appendix F). Among casual employees, for instance, those working part time were marginally more satisfied with job security than were those working full time. For other contract types, workers did not feel less secure in part time employment.

While part time workers were generally more satisfied with their hours than were full time workers, the gap was marginally smaller among casual workers. That is, the satisfaction with work hours of casual part time employees was less than that of other part time employees, and similar to full time employees.

The data also showed further influences of contract type on satisfaction. For both full time and part time workers, those on casual contracts were marginally less happy with the nature of their work than those on fixed term or permanent contracts. And among part timers, contract workers were considerably happier with their pay than were permanent workers.

Satisfaction levels were also affected by occupation and skill groups (table F.9 in Appendix F). Part time workers in the top three skill levels, particularly professionals, were more satisfied with their pay than their full time counterparts. Part time workers were also more satisfied with their work hours at these higher skill levels, in contrast to those in lower skill levels. These results are consistent with the idea that people at higher skill levels are better paid and tend to be relatively 'income rich' and 'time poor', and are happier to forego some earnings for more leisure time.

11.7 Summary

The data reinforces the view that the distribution of occupations and contract types is different for part time workers from full time workers. This difference explains much of the varying access to entitlements by part time and full time employees. Differences also exist in the scheduling of full time and part time work, in that part time workers are more likely than full time workers to hold multiple jobs, to work evenings or weekends, or to have irregular shifts. However, the majority of part time workers hold a single job with a regular weekday schedule of daytime shifts. In this way, most part time schedules are very similar to traditional full time schedules, but with fewer hours per day or fewer days per week.

The analysis also shows that dimensions of job quality differ between full time and part time jobs, but are affected by several factors. Job satisfaction tends to vary by the type of contract and occupation. Age and gender are also shown to be substantial influences at times. Together, these factors are sometimes more significant than working hours in their effect on perceptions of job quality. The implication is that there are different types of part time job and different motivations for working. This suggests that the analysis of job quality must go beyond the broad comparisons between part time and full time workers.

Some positive dimensions of part time work are noted. Part time workers are marginally more likely to have flexible start and finish times for work, and appear to have marginally more success in balancing work and family life. They appear to be marginally less stressed by their work. Furthermore, job satisfaction ratings suggests that overall, part time workers are no less satisfied with their jobs than are full time workers. Indeed, the reported levels of job satisfaction may reflect the degree of success of matching the job with the worker's requirements as much as the intrinsic qualities of the job.

However, a number of aspects of part time jobs are also noted that are typically considered as negative. In general, people working part time jobs have less access to benefits and training. They are also more likely to be in lower skilled and less challenging jobs, and are less likely to have supervisory duties. Consistent with these negative aspects of career progression, the rate of promotions among part time workers is slower than for full time workers.

Despite these aspects, part time workers still appear to be satisfied with their jobs. This may reflect that some part time workers are willing to forgo career progression and training to obtain the flexibility of part time jobs. In addition, some part time workers may actually prefer less challenging jobs or jobs with less responsibility.