

ATTACHMENT A

Survey Results of Police Part Time Workers

A research project was conducted by the Police Association of New South Wales and the Police Federation of Australia in 2008 to survey part time members. The purpose was to provide advice to the Police Federation's Women's Advisory Committee about issues effecting part time members.¹

The following information is a condensed version of the full survey results. It is submitted in conjunction with the full report for consideration by the Productivity Commission relevant to barriers affecting workforce participation of women police officers following childbirth. It is the Federation's view that women officers do not generally return to front line policing due to difficulties accessing appropriate forms of child care. We contend this is an expensive exercise across the entire Australian community, not only in economic terms but also with regard to equitable access to a police force that is representative of the community it serves. The survey results also highlighted the ad hoc arrangements that children of police families face, in their attempts to access appropriate early childhood education and care programs. It is believed this will disadvantage these children in their transition to school and early learning generally, thereby affecting their long-term education in a negative way.

Survey Report Introduction

- 1. The survey was conducted throughout each jurisdiction.** Five categories of work locations were identified – General Duties, Traffic, Detective, Specialist and Support.²
- 2. There were 674 responses to the Part Time Work Survey. 91% of participants were female and 9% were male.** A majority of survey participants (457 responses) were aged between 31-40 years of age. 30% of survey participants indicated they had 5-10 years length of service and 28% had 11-15 years length of service. The majority of survey participants (580 responses) were received from police officers ranked in the category of Probationary Constable/Constable/Senior Constable. There were 81 overall responses from the NSW policing jurisdiction, 159 responses from the Queensland policing jurisdiction, 143 responses from the South Australia policing jurisdiction, 91 responses from the Western Australian policing jurisdiction, 58 responses from the Victorian policing jurisdiction and 41 overall responses from the Tasmanian jurisdiction.³
- 3. It is an accepted belief that for members wanting to balance work life and family life, part time work is the most viable solution, however the reality of part time work is often more difficult than first imagined⁴.**
- 4. Question six of the Part Time survey asked participants to select the main reason for working part time.** 605 (90%) of surveyed police indicated that the main reason for them undertaking part time work was to provide care for their child/children.⁵

¹ Police Association of New South Wales and Police Federation of Australia, Police Part Time Workers Survey Results, August 2008, Page 1

² Ibid, p 1

³ Loc. cit

⁴ Loc. cit

5. **Question 13 asked participants what their former duty type was when they changed duty type on commencing part time work.** 58% of police surveyed answered General Duties as their former duty type. 242 (81%) of police answered the reason for their change in duty type when commencing part time work was to facilitate their carers responsibilities.⁶
6. **Question 15 asked participants what factors influenced their decision to change duty type.** 124 surveyed police answered the availability of flexible work practices as their reason. Question 16 asked participants what options had they considered in order to meet their carers' responsibilities. 132 police answered resigning as their only other option considered in order to meet their carer's responsibilities. Question 17 asked participants (other than part time work) what other options were offered by their Command to assist them in meeting their carer's responsibilities. 350 police indicated that no options were offered by their Command.⁷
7. **The number one reason why surveyed police officers are working part time was to provide care for child/children.**⁸

Survey recipients' reason for choosing to work part time		
	Number of Responses	
To provide care for child/children	605	90%
To provide care for parent/spouse/other	10	1%
Study commitments	11	2%
Secondary employment	14	2%
Other	29	4%

Table: Police officers' responses indicating their reason for choosing to work part time.

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⁵ Ibid, p 2

⁶ Ibid, p 2

⁷ Loc. cit

⁸ Ibid, p 9

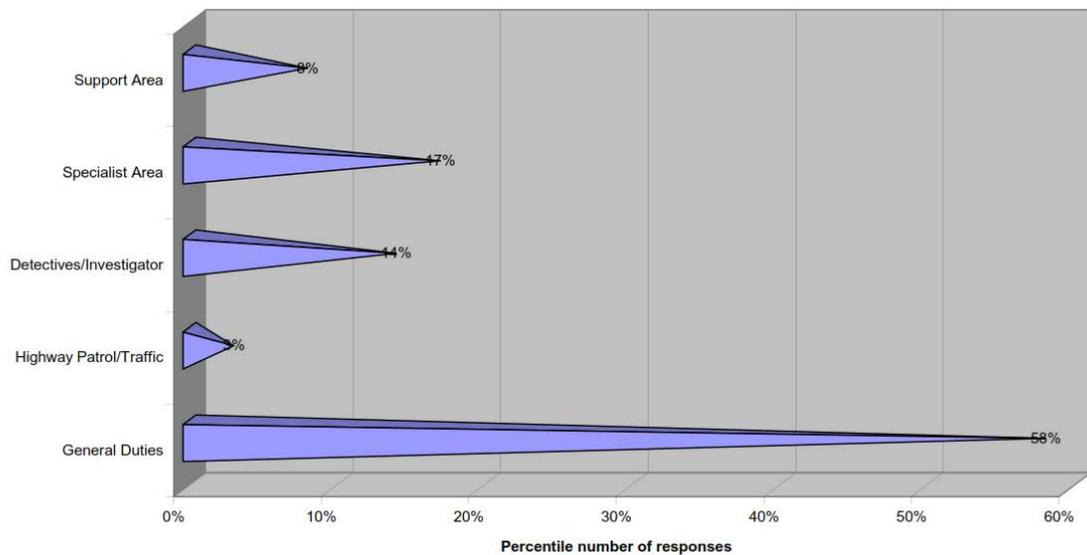
⁹ Loc. cit

Surveyed police indicating the provision of child care as their main reason to go part time in relation to their policing jurisdictions		
	Number of Responses	
New South Wales	169	93%
Queensland	152	96%
Victoria	50	86%
Tasmania	38	93%
South Australia	126	88%
Western Australia	78	86%

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8. Question 13: If you did change duty type when commencing part time work, what was your former duty type?

Of the 674 responses received, 177 (58%) surveyed police answered General Duties as their former duty type.¹¹



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¹⁰ Ibid, p 10

¹¹ Ibid, p 24

¹² Loc. cit

9. Question 14: If you did change duty type when commencing part time work, did you do so to facilitate your carer's responsibility?

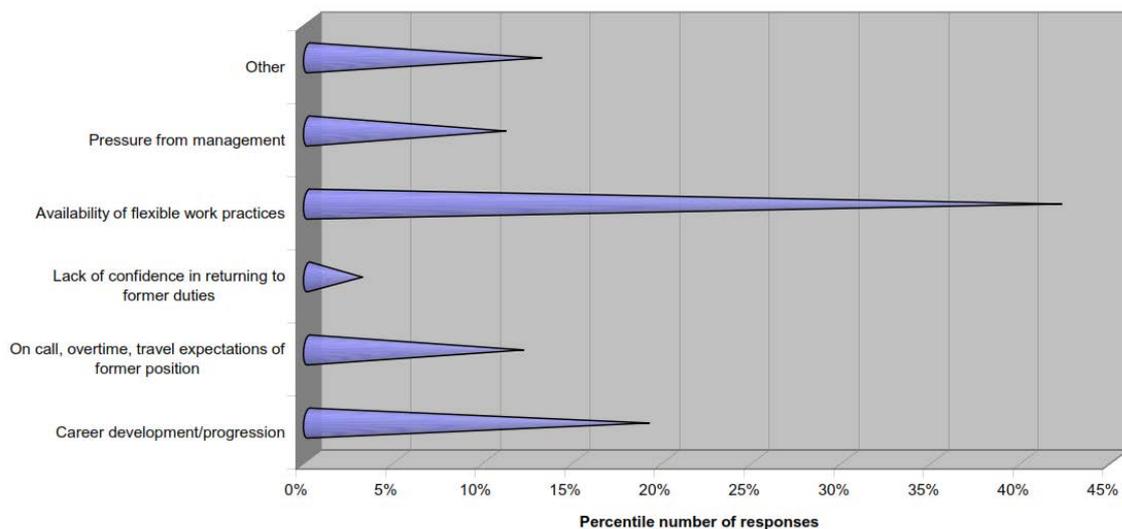
Of the 674 responses received 242 (81%) of police surveyed answered Yes to changing their duty type when commencing part time work to facilitate their carer's responsibilities and 57 (19%) police answered No.

Survey recipients indicating yes or no to question of whether they changed duty type when commencing part time work so as to facilitate their carers responsibilities		
	Number of Responses	
Yes	242	81%
No	57	19%

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10. Question 15: What factors influenced your decision to change duty type?

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11. Question 16: Other than part time work, what options have you considered in order to meet your carer's responsibilities?

Of the 674 responses received 132 (20%) of police surveyed considered resigning as an option rather than part time work in order to meet their carer's responsibilities. 101 (51%) police surveyed considered roster flexibility e.g. change start/finish time, split shifts as another option other than part time work in order to meet their carer's responsibilities.¹⁵

¹³ Ibid, p 25

¹⁴ Ibid, p 27

¹⁵ Ibid, p 32

12. Survey recipients were asked to list types of options they considered in order to meet their carer's responsibilities. The following statements include some of those responses:

- When husband is a shift worker too, it is difficult to get set shifts. I changed jobs to facilitate school hours.
- Desk duties
- Court action
- I have considered employing a nanny or au pair to care for children during shifts (far too expensive) and I have looked at longer shifts to reduce the number of days I would require child care.
- I have considered working as part of a ten hour roster which would allow me to return to full time work and provide me with the necessary days off to care for my children.
- I resigned in 1999 as I was unable to obtain part time work after having a child.
- Considered paid child care and or care by grandparents. Childcare too expensive, considered not fair on children to be in care for extended periods. Grandparents too old. Considered my wife to work part time. My wife could not have her position converted to part time. She would have lost that particular position. ¹⁶

13. Question 17 : Other than part time work, what options were offered by your Command to assist you in meeting your carer's responsibilities?

Of the 674 responses, 359 (53%) police surveyed were offered no options by their Command to assist them in meeting their carer's responsibilities. ¹⁷

Surveyed police were asked to list any other options they were offered by their Command in order to assist them in meeting their carer's responsibilities. Statements include some of these responses:

- Resign
- Request to work different shift lengths was denied by management.
- Forced transfer.
- Leave of absence
- I asked not to work full night shift but was refused. Child care is needed for the night worked and the next day, i.e. 2 x 2300-0700 shifts = 4 child care shifts.
- I was actually contacted by Command after submitting my resignation and when I stated my reasons I was told that if I wanted to resign, the Police Force would be happy to have me back.
- Resigning – at the time, 4 years ago, my station and divisional supervisors were not supportive in my part time application.
- Only offering to let me go part time if I agreed to work every weekend. ¹⁸

14. Surveyed police were asked to make comment on whether a request to return to full time work was refused by their Commander/Manager since commencing part time work. Statements include some of these responses:

- Refused because management would have to pay another officer higher duties so that my husband (sgt) could take long service leave to care for children.

¹⁶ Ibid p 34-36

¹⁷ Ibid p 37

¹⁸ Ibid p 38-40

- When I initially returned to work from maternity leave with second child was told had to return to full time duties in general duties, on 12 hour shifts or transfer to another command.
- The commander would prefer to have no part time staff.
- I have requested to increase my hours, previously with the request being denied.
- I have asked about increasing my hours but was informed that my hours had been absorbed by the district and allocated to another part time member. I would have to go on a waiting list for when more hours became available across the division.
- I have requested to increase my hours from 16 hours per week to 24 hours. I have been making this request for approx. 6 months and I am continually told there are no hours available. The other half of my position has been transferred from my work location.¹⁹

15. Surveyed police were asked to provide additional comments regarding their current level of job satisfaction in their part time arrangement. Comments included the following:²⁰

1. The only reason that I am on part time is so that I can set my shifts and be able to look after my children.
2. My husband is also a serving member. Often we are rostered on opposite day and night shifts where one is forced to care for the children with little or no sleep then return to duty that night.
3. I often wish that I could resign as I felt the Command is unwilling to support part time staff, particularly those who choose part time work as they are primary carers for their children.
4. I work my roster around my husband's shifts, who is also a police officer and my mother in law who looks after our 2 children of 4 years and 2 years old. At the moment if I was to return to full time work it would be very difficult to arrange child care for that time. If I was to put the children in day care I wouldn't be able to because my travel time to work is between four hours daily and I work 12 hour shifts. Therefore I am away for 16 hours and no childcare facility near my home is open for those hours.
5. I have given up on the idea of ever getting to senior constable. I will be one of the oldest hardworking constables with nothing to show for it except a child who is hopefully as well adjusted as she can be growing up in a single parent home.
6. There is always underlying pressure to return to full time and husband is also a police officer juggling shifts. You do not wish to put children into full time child care, it is very difficult to juggle family and work.²¹
7. I will be left with no option but to resign. The stress on family life whilst trying to keep the Police District happy is not worth it. My family are based away from me (1000km) so I do not have the luxury of support.
8. It's a balancing act. General duties is unpredictable, but child care is not flexible.
9. I fully understand why female officers resign from the constant pressure that is placed on them.

¹⁹ Ibid p 99 - 104

²⁰ Ibid p 106

²¹ Ibid p 107 -111

10. The hours suit my home life but I don't feel like I contribute to the office as I am only there 2 days a week. I could return full time and we work opposite shifts but we wouldn't have a relationship.
11. It is extremely hard to find day care to fit in and around rotational shift work as my husband also works shift work.
12. My part time contract is allowing me to balance home and work life.
13. I am pleased there are part time work options as I would have resigned after having my children. The service would have lost 15 years' experience. Fellow officers resigned before the part time option was available.
14. I acknowledge that performing part time work is essential at this stage in my life in order to raise a young family. However it comes at a cost whereby my career progression is being restricted as there are fewer opportunities for training, relieving and thus promotion.
15. I am currently on parental leave. I am considering resignation as my husband is also a police officer and juggling shifts for the two of us and the care of our children may prove too difficult of our new work location. Our closest family support is an hour and a half from us and we are unlikely to use paid child care for a number of reasons.
16. When I first started part time we were moved to support roles. Our part time contracts were worked out because of two kids. Works great until you have to do frontline and pay for carers. If part time set shifts were not available to me then I would be forced to leave the police and seek other employment. My husband is a police officer and works a 24 hour roster and with us having small children even with the help of relatives it would be impossible to ensure that there was someone available to care for our children at all times.
17. Flexibility makes the difference between staying and going; family, particularly children, will always come first.
18. There are times when I am happy with the arrangements when no pressure to work outside core hours. However when the pressure to work hours that conflict with child care is where I feel bullied and victimised.
19. On the other hand we have seen a high number of couples in the LAC making complimentary rostering extremely difficult and the lack of child care services to cater for shift and weekend workers contributes to this problem.
20. My concerns are having 3 young school aged children and a husband who has to commute 2 hours to and from work. I work a 9.5 hour shift and school is only 6 hours. Financially we cannot afford before and after school care, no family close by to assist. We have to rely on friends a lot or the children are on their own at home. Currently I am working at changing duty type and having to work night shifts only. I don't see any other solution.
21. After working part time for 14 years and with my 3 children a bit older I returned to full time work only to find it extremely difficult to manage work and family and I was overwhelmed by the physical and emotional drain. I have resigned myself to being a career senior constable. It is not such a big price to pay when choosing between work and family and choosing family will always come first for me. You cannot have your cake and eat it too!²²

²² Ibid, p 112 - 127

22. Decide to return to full time for job opportunity only to find the change extremely difficult physically and mentally as I felt guilty at not being able to be there for the kids the same way. After 19 years, I returned to part time work defeated and disappointed. The dream is dead. I am just here for the money. The End.
23. I am given work that less experienced personnel would find easy in other words I am not challenged by it. Consequently, I am losing my skills but I try to concentrate on the reason why I am part time which is to be the best mother that I can be.
24. You almost have to go to a non-operational area for the flexible rostering. Career opportunities are almost non-existent.
25. I am about to return to work full time due to difficulties encountered with management. I have worked for nearly 8 years. I was made to feel as if I should just resign.
26. More part timers now = retention of skilled women.
27. Prior to obtaining my current part time position I was a general duties member. I was finally offered a part time position in a completely different section.
28. Working at home doing prosecution work. Previously was a general duties member.
29. At this stage in my life work provides me an income. My commitment is with family. I accept my position in the workplace and try to make the most of it.
30. Currently I work in the front office of a country station – this meets my immediate family needs. I anticipate moving to an investigative role again in the future.
31. I am in an area which does not really interest me. I do it due to the flexibility in shifts and day work. I have not used any of my study qualifications. In order to work in other areas of interest I have to have completed internal courses of 4-6 weeks duration which I cannot do due to child care commitments.
32. I was unable to work in my normal position on patrols as it was deemed too hard to manage. My skills suffered.
33. I am content with working school hours having the flexibility to change start times. The areas in which to have some flexibility however are very limited and can be detrimental to promotion.
34. I had to employ a nanny to care for my children due to the hours I was required to work including overtime and recall as no other child care options were available after hours.
35. I was a general duties patrol sergeant prior to having a baby. I knew I would not be going back to that position due to the 24 hour roster and unpredictability of start and finish times. I chose to revert in rank back to senior constable and take up a position in intelligence.
36. Being able to work from home has enabled my family to function without the pressure of shift work at a facility whilst raising three young children along with my spouse working overseas. Failing this I may have been forced into a position of having to resign after 19 years of service.

37. As a single parent with no family assistance available I had no babysitters. My 9 year old child was not old enough to look after himself at home while I was on afternoon shift.
38. I would rather resign for my own flexibility but I need the financial security.
39. I was not given the opportunity to work part time in this area. Due to my partner's long work hours (non-police) I was unable to go on patrols as we had no family support regarding child care.
40. Back doing general patrols on a set roster that assists the station and does not include night shift, which is beneficial to family life. However as time wears on the need for a day shift job is fast approaching with afternoon shift weekend wearing thin with the kids. If I had not been as flexible I would have resigned years ago.
41. Currently on maternity leave. I am not happy to return due to problems faced in trying to accommodate work hours and child care availability.
42. Working in a support role and not general duties policing gives me more flexibility.²³

The survey report concluded with over 35 pages of comments, numbering 322 in total, in response to job satisfaction within part time arrangements. The 42 comments listed above have been selected as they are indicative of some of the issues concerning 24 hour rosters and access to child care, the lack of which effectively takes women officers away from front line policing and into office jobs. It also highlights the loss of skills and career stagnation as a result of the inability to access quality child care and flexible work arrangements.

²³ Ibid, p 127 - 139