

*Australian Work and Life Index 2012*

# Work-Life balance in South Australia 2012

# AWALI

Natalie Skinner



**University of South Australia**

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## Executive summary

### **A healthy work-life relationship – a South Australia government strategic goal**

The South Australian (SA) Government has identified the improvement of South Australians' quality of life through the maintenance of a healthy work-life balance as one of its 100 State Strategic Targets within the State Strategic Plan (Target 13). A primary goal of this target relates to 'spending quality time with our families'.

The Australian Work-Life Index (AWALI) is the major psychometric benchmark against which progress on this target is measured. From 2010 onwards, AWALI data has been collected on a biennial basis both nationally and within South Australia. Following the benchmark data collection of 987 South Australian (SA) workers in 2010, this report describes the 2012 AWALI survey of 1002 SA workers.

The SA Government has identified work-life balance as a central component of a good quality of life. Indeed, the importance of paid work to individuals and households is only likely to increase, with the rising employment participation levels of women, sole parents, younger people combining work and study, and older people transitioning into retirement.

Within the research literature the importance of having a healthy relationship between paid work and other life domains, where paid work is not overly intrusive, has been well established. Physical and mental health, family and community life all benefit from workers opportunities and capacities to access 'decent jobs' that allow them time for other important life pursuits, such as meeting family, community and personal needs.

### **The Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) - overview**

This report discusses key findings from the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI) survey. AWALI is comprised of a composite index bringing together five measures of work-life interference to construct an overall work-life index that is scaled from 0 (lowest work-life interference) to 100 (highest work-life interference). The index provides an easily understood general benchmark of work-life interference.

The five items that make up AWALI include: the extent to which paid work interferes with activities outside of work; community connections and time with family and friends (three items); time pressure (one item); and overall satisfaction with work-life balance (one item).

The South Australian (SA) AWALI survey involves a telephone survey of around 1000 SA workers, conducted in February/March biennially since 2010.

### **Work-life interference in South Australia for 2012**

The AWALI survey score for South Australia in 2012 was 43.8 (on a scale of 0 - 100 with 100 being the worst possible score). This score is comparable with the SA 2010 score of 42.3, and the national 2012 average score of 43.0 (Figure 1).

For most SA workers, other than for a few exceptions, there has been little change from 2010 in their work-life interference levels; the likelihood that they will work long hours (48+), or longer than they prefer; or their experiences of time pressure. Key findings are described below and summarised in Figure 2.

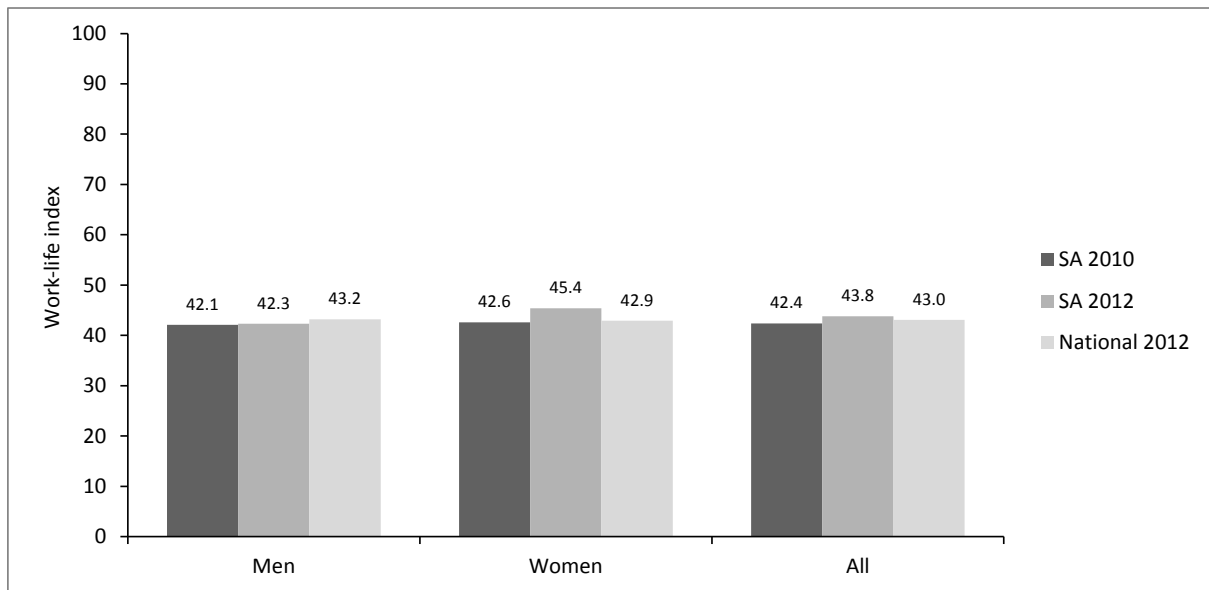


Figure 1 Work-life index scores by gender

### ***SA men have better work-life balance than the Australian average***

South Australian men are the one group whose work-life balance is better than the national average. They are less likely to report that work frequently interferes with their life outside work, and adjusting for working hours, their score on the work-life index is lower than the national average (Figure 13, page 19).

This result may be partially due to the fact that men in the SA AWALI sample are less likely to work long hours (48+) than the national average for men. This may protect against work-life interference.

### ***SA women are most at risk of poor work-life balance, with little evidence of improvement***

There are consistent trends in work-life interference that can be observed in SA, as well as nationally and in similar countries internationally based on gender:

- SA women consistently report higher levels of work-life interference than men, and this is the case for those in both full-time and part-time work;
- Longer working hours also have a greater negative impact (higher work-life index scores) on SA women's work-life interference compared to men's;
- There is also evidence of a small, but statistically significant, increase in SA women's work-life interference in 2012 compared to 2010.

### ***Many SA workers would like to work fewer hours***

As well as the actual hours worked, a second important dimension of working time is the hours people would prefer to work, taking into account the effects of associated changes to their income.

There is evidence that in the 2012 AWALI survey, as occurred with the SA AWALI survey in 2010 and the national 2012 AWALI survey, many SA workers would prefer to work fewer hours:

- Around 40 per cent of SA workers would prefer to work at least half a day less;
- This increases to around 75 per cent of those working long hours (48+);
- 1 in 4 of the SA women, and 1 in 2 mothers, working full-time would prefer part-time hours.

***Parenting is associated with increased work-life strains and pressures***

It is well-established that parents experience greater work-life interference than those without children. This pattern is also observed in the SA AWALI 2010 and 2012 surveys.

Of particular note is that SA mothers report higher work-life interference than SA fathers, and this is the case even though fathers work substantially longer hours than mothers.

This pattern is also evident in the SA 2010 and the national 2012 AWALI surveys.

***Industry and occupation impact on work-life interference, but not size of firm or employment sector***

Certain jobs put workers at increased risk of work-life strains and pressures. These patterns can be observed in the SA and national survey data. The highest work-life interference is reported by:

- Managers and professionals;
- Workers in female-dominated industries involving interactions/delivery of services to other people – education and training, health care and social services, and accommodation and food services.

***SA workers' patterns of requesting and accessing flexible work practices are comparable to the national average***

One in five SA workers have made a request for a flexible work arrangement, reflecting a similar pattern to that observed in the national 2012 AWALI survey. Where requests have been made, 70 per cent of flexibility requests have been fully accepted by employers.

Those most likely to make a request are:

- Mothers, especially of preschool-aged children;
- Part-time workers, especially women;
- Workers in sales occupations (most of whom are women).

The most common reasons given for requesting flexibility are to meet childcare or family responsibilities, or to accommodate study or health needs.

The majority of workers who do not request flexibility say they are satisfied with their current work arrangements.

***Reasonable hours that fit with preferences and access to flexible work arrangements are important work-life resources***

For all workers, men and women, parents and those without children, three work factors consistently predict lower work-life interference:

- Reasonable working hours – either part-time, or full-time hours that do not exceed 47 hours per week;
- Working hours that fit with needs and preferences;
- Access to flexible work arrangements when needed.

Figure 2(next page) provides an overview of the key findings described previously.

	High <sup>a</sup> work-life interference	Long hours (48+) <sup>b</sup>	Working 4+ hours longer than prefer	Higher index score than SA 2010	Higher index score than Aust 2012	Lower index score than Aust 2012
Men						
All		✓				✓
With children		✓				
No children						
Full-time (all)						
35-47 hours						
48+ hours	✓		✓			
Part-time						
Managers & professionals	✓					
Women						
All	✓			✓	✓	
With children	✓			✓		
No children				✓		
Full-time (all)	✓			✓		
35-47 hours	✓		✓			
48+ hours	✓		✓			
Part-time				✓		
Managers & professionals	✓					
All						
All						
With children						
No children						
Full-time (all)	✓		✓			
35-47 hours			✓			
48+ hours	✓		✓			
Part-time						
Managers & professionals	✓					
Industry						
Education & training	✓					
Health/social services	✓					
Hospitality <sup>d</sup>	✓					

Note. High work-life interference denotes a higher work-life index score than the average for the SA sample as a whole. Long hours denotes higher than average likelihood of working 48+ hours. Work more than preferred denotes higher than average likelihood of working at least 4 hours longer than preferred. <sup>d</sup>Accommodation and food services.

Figure 2 Overview of groups most likely to experience work-life strains in 2012

### ***Recommendations for policy and practice***

Many of the key findings and observations that are made with regard to South Australian's work-life balance in 2012 reflect well-established patterns that have been observed in the 2010 SA survey, and also the national AWALI surveys. These patterns, in turn, mirror well-established research findings in the Australian and international literature.

There is however, one important exception, and that is the observation that work-life interference for women working full-time, whether they have children or not, is slightly higher in 2012 than in 2010. A similar pattern can be observed in the national data. The contrast is modest, so this finding should not be over-interpreted. Whether this contrast reflects a longer-term trend will also be informed by the findings of the next SA and national AWALI surveys, scheduled for 2014. Nevertheless, men's work-life interference has remained stable over time, whereas women have reported a worsening of work-life interference. This indicates that more supports and resources are needed to assist women to participate in paid work whilst maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Changing this gender dynamic to achieve a more equitable pattern requires large scale change in social attitudes and norms. Industrial relations reform has a role here. For example, analyses of gendered patterns of unpaid care across a range of countries have observed that men's contribution to unpaid work varies depending on the length of parental leave available and their eligibility to take such leave (Hook, 2006; Reich, Boll, & Leppin, 2012). Industrial relations reform to strengthen men's and women's access to working hours that are 'decent' would help. Working hours that fit well with other non-work commitments and activities (including providing care), would benefit working women's work-life balance and wellbeing directly (via their own work patterns) and indirectly (via men's patterns of paid and unpaid work).

**Recommendation 1:** Further develop supports and resources to enable women to engage in paid work and meet their non-work needs and responsibilities, including care for children, family, community and self.

Combining work and care, especially full-time work, clearly creates substantial work-life strains and pressures for women in SA and nationally. Important work-life supports and resources to support women's employment participation and wellbeing include:

- Better access to high quality affordable childcare;
- Access to flexible work arrangements that extends to all women (and men), regardless of their parenting status;
- Initiatives to encourage and support men's capacity to participate equally in family and household life, to increase gender equity in unpaid work (see Recommendation 4);
- Initiatives that encourage supportive work-life cultures in Australian workplaces, that include reasonable expectations of workload and working hours.

**Recommendation 2:** Continue to support and develop policies and initiatives to ensure workers' access to 'reasonable hours', that do not exceed their needs and preferences.

Consistent with the SafeWork SA (SWSA) Code of Practice on Working Hours (SafeWork SA, 2010), there is a clear link between higher work-life interference and both long working hours (45+) and working longer hours than preferred. Consistent with the research literature, the Code also identifies a range of other negative outcomes associated with long working hours including fatigue and risks to safety, physical and mental health.

Continuing support for initiatives and activities that support awareness and implementation of the SWSA Code of Practice on Working Hours is a priority for supporting progress on the State Strategic Target (13) to 'improve the quality of life of all South Australians through the

maintenance of a healthy work-life balance’, with the primary goal of ‘spending quality time with our families’. Long working hours are a clear and significant barrier for workers’ capacity to have a healthy work-life balance and spend time with their families.

It must be recognised, however, that whilst public promotion and management support for policies and procedures are necessary, these are not sufficient to ensure reasonable working hours. Initiatives to address long working hours require a holistic approach that examines the factors that encourage or require long hours, such as workloads, performance expectations, implicit and explicit rewards for long hours (i.e. links to promotion and other rewards) and organisational culture (Burke & Cooper, 2008; Lewis, 2001; McDonald, Brown, & Bradley, 2005; van Echtelt, Glebbeek, Wielers, & Lindenberg, 2007). For example, the inclusion of wellbeing and work-life balance issues in staff reviews (e.g. checking working hours in employee performance reviews, establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) for supervisors/managers) sends a clear message of the value that management places on these.

**Recommendation 3:** Further support policies, practices and cultures for flexible work practices that meet business and workers’ needs.

A key resource and support for a healthy work-life balance is providing access to flexible work arrangements, where workers can negotiate changes to working hours, scheduling and timing to suit their needs and preferences.

There is strong evidence in the research literature that flexible work practices have a range of business benefits, including improvements to motivation and productivity, and reductions in absenteeism and staff turnover. There are also benefits for individual worker wellbeing (better work-life balance, reducing stress, health improvements) (Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, & Brinley, 2005; Pocock, Skinner, & Williams, 2012).

Flexibility can be offered and supported in a variety of ways such as through:

- Reduced working hours;
- Compressed working weeks;
- Working from home arrangements;
- Flexitime;
- Variable start and finishing times;
- Extended leave options.

Nationally, the Fair Work Act (2009) provides a statutory entitlement for certain workers, namely parents of children of pre-school age or of children with a disability aged up to 18 years. Our findings indicate that a universal right to request reduced working hours would be of benefit to the health and wellbeing of all workers, regardless of whether they are parents or not. This should be recognised in both the National Employment Standards, and organisational policies on work-life balance and flexible work arrangements.

Not only would greater access to flexible work practices for men and women be a significant benefit to workers’ wellbeing, it would also be likely to increase employment participation. Consistent with this argument, in an Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) survey of individuals who would like to enter the labour force but were not currently in paid work, 58 per cent said they would need to work part-time and 39 per cent said they would need flexible start and finish times (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

**Recommendation 4:** Further develop policies, programs and initiatives to support the capacity of men and those working in male-dominated occupations and industries to work reasonable hours and access flexible work arrangements.

This includes supporting and encouraging men’s uptake of:

- ‘Partner specific’ forms of leave;
- Flexible work arrangements to meet parenting and other caring responsibilities, including reduced hours of work.

Men's wellbeing could be improved and their opportunity and capacity to be more actively engaged in family life could be enhanced by enabling them to access reasonable working hours that fit with their preferences, flexible work arrangements and other important work-life supports such as paid leave. This also provides a valuable opportunity to promote greater gender equity in the sharing of unpaid care and domestic work, which in turn is likely to positively impact on women's work-life balance (Hook, 2006; Reich, et al., 2012).

## Section 1: Introduction

---

### *Background to this report*

Since 2008, SafeWork SA has been a major industry partner and funder of the Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI), conducted as part of a series of Australian Research Council (ARC) Linkage projects.

The national AWALI data has been collected annually since 2007 and has examined how work-life interference is influenced by a range of employment (e.g. job quality, organisational culture, flexibility, unsocial working hours, occupation, industry) and social-demographic factors (e.g. gender, parenting status, age).

In 2010, SafeWork SA funded a survey of 987 South Australian (SA) workers to enable an in-depth examination of South Australians' work-life interference, and to identify the social-demographic and employment groups with the lowest and highest work-life interference. Key findings are summarised in the report 'Juggling work-life balance in South Australia', available from Centre for Work + Life website

<http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl/projects/awali.asp>.

In 2012, SafeWork SA funded a second AWALI survey of 1002 SA workers, to examine the current state of work-life balance in South Australia and any change since 2010. As the national AWALI survey moved from an annual to a biennial schedule from 2010 onwards, the SA survey also followed suit. The next national and SA AWALI surveys will be in 2014.

### *What AWALI measures*

AWALI measures work-life interference that includes, but is not confined to, work-family issues. Those without children also experience spillover from their working lives onto their relationships, recreation, households, health and well-being, family life and care responsibilities.

AWALI also measures the effects of work on community connections. Putting more hours into paid work affects our relationships beyond home, including our capacity to build friendship networks in the broader community, but these are generally not investigated in assessments of work-life interference.

AWALI also employs a commonly used single measure of time pressure (feeling rushed or pressed for time) in daily life, which is an indirect measure of work-life fit. Finally, AWALI includes a general assessment of satisfaction with work-life balance.

In sum, AWALI measures perceptions of work-life interference focussing on:

- 'General interference' (i.e. the frequency with which work interferes with responsibilities or activities outside work);
- 'Time strain' (i.e. the frequency with which work restricts time with family or friends);
- Work-to-community interference (i.e. the frequency with which work affects workers' ability to develop or maintain connections and friendships in their local community);
- Satisfaction with overall work-life 'balance';
- Frequency of feeling 'rushed or pressed for time'.

We bring together these five measures of work-life interference to arrive at an overall work-life index that is scaled from 0 (lowest work-life interference) to 100 (highest work-life interference). The index provides an easily understood general measure of work-life interference.



While we recognise that work-to-life and life-to-work interferences have both positive and negative effects, AWALI concentrates upon negative interactions given that these are of most immediate policy interest and that limited resources constrain what we can measure.

*The AWALI SA 2012 sample and methodology*

The concepts, methods, literature, measures and pilot tests underpinning AWALI are set out in Pocock, Williams and Skinner (2007) *The Australian Work and Life Index (AWALI): Concepts, Methodology & Rationale* available on the Centre’s website at <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl/projects/awali.asp>

AWALI surveys a randomly selected cross-section of the adult South Australian employed population by means of computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI).

The SA AWALI 2012 is a national stratified sample of interviews conducted over four weekends in February/March 2012 by Newspoll. In accordance with Newspoll’s usual practice, respondents were selected by means of a random sample process which includes separate quotas for respondents living in Adelaide city/metropolitan and SA rural/regional areas, respectively. Household telephone numbers were selected using random digit dialling and there was a random selection of an individual in each household by means of a ‘last birthday’ screening question.

The SA survey sample comprises 1002 respondents (Table 1).

In Section 3, data is also reported on two additional samples: the SA AWALI 2010 survey and the national AWALI 2012 survey. In subsequent sections, SA AWALI 2012 findings are also compared with SA AWALI 2010 (excluding flexibility requesting) and national AWALI 2012 findings. Statistically significant contrasts are noted in the text. Unless specified otherwise, SA AWALI 2012 data is used in Sections 4 to 6.

Table 1 Sample sizes for SA and national AWALI data collections

	SA 2012	SA 2010	National 2012
All	<b>1002</b>	<b>987</b>	<b>2861</b>
Full-time	<b>652</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>1858</b>
Men	<b>413</b>	<b>424</b>	<b>1191</b>
Women	<b>239</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>667</b>
Part-time	<b>350</b>	<b>332</b>	<b>1003</b>
Men	<b>104</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>318</b>
Women	<b>246</b>	<b>248</b>	<b>685</b>

Due to an administrative error, data on employment contract (permanent, fixed-term, casual, employee, self-employed) is not available for SA 2012. However, employment contract data will be collected in the 2014 SA AWALI survey.

*Reporting conventions*

In this report we focus on major findings, with particular attention paid to patterns and trends that are likely to be of most interest and relevance. We highlight significant changes over time from SA AWALI 2010 to 2012 surveys, and also instances where the SA AWALI 2012 findings differ from the national AWALI 2012 average. Detailed data is provided in the Appendix to this report, available from the Centre for Work + Life website <http://w3.unisa.edu.au/hawkeinstitute/cwl/projects/awali.asp>.

The following statistical conventions are used in this report unless specified otherwise.

Following Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) conventions, full-time employment is defined as 35 or more working hours per week. All contrasts discussed in the text are statistically significant

(i.e. not likely to be due to chance) at  $p < .05$  unless stated otherwise. The Dunn-Bonferroni correction was applied to multiple comparisons.

Working hours have a clear and consistent impact on work-life interference: as hours increase work-life interference also tends to increase. Therefore, working hours are entered as a covariate in some analyses in which mean scores on the index measure are compared. This means that the effect of working hours on the index scores is statistically removed, or ‘controlled’, to observe the unique effect of another factor (e.g. gender) on work-life index scores. In this type of analysis we are essentially asking the ‘what if’ question of how work-life interference differs between groups (e.g. men and women) if they worked the same hours. For example ‘what if men and women worked the same hours, would there be any difference in their work-life interference?’.

As a sample drawn from a much larger population, the estimates presented in this report like all survey data, are subject to a degree of sampling bias; that is, the estimates may be different from the figures that would have been reported had all South Australian workers been surveyed. Two strategies have been used to address this issue. All reported estimates have been weighted by Australian Bureau of Statistics data on age, highest level of schooling completed and gender to adjust for differences between the AWALI SA sample and the South Australian population on these key demographics. Secondly, we follow the threshold rule used in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) study (Heady, Warren, & Harding, 2006) which sets a minimum of 20 units (i.e. respondents) that must contribute to the value of a cell for that figure to be considered reliable. Estimates that do not meet this threshold requirement are accompanied by an asterisk indicating that this figure should be interpreted with caution.

#### *The work-life index*

To arrive at the AWALI summary work-life index we average and standardise the five measures of work-life interference described above.

The five-item work-life index has satisfactory internal consistency (Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .82$ ).

In the 2012 survey the SA average (mean) score on the index is 43.8 (43.0 nationally in 2012). Therefore, scores above the average score of around 44 indicate a work-life interference that is worse than average and scores below this level indicate a better than average work-life balance.

## Section 2: The AWALI 2012 SA sample

This section provides an overview of the SA AWALI 2012 worker sample and their general characteristics. The total sample consisted of 1002 workers.

Table 2 shows that the SA AWALI 2012 provides a good representation of the SA labour market at the time of the survey with respect to gender, age, type of employment and part-time/full-time working hours. There is a slight over-representation of people with a non-school qualification (i.e. vocational certificate, university degree). Community/personal service and clerical/administrative workers are slightly over-represented, with machinery operators/drivers and labourers under-represented.

Table 2 Overview of the AWALI 2012 SA sample (per cent)

	Men	Women	All	ABS – SA
All	51.7	48.3	100.0	(54.1 men; 45.9 women)
<b>Age group</b>				
18–24	12.5	13.6	13.0	17.1 <sup>a</sup>
25–34	19.0	21.1	20.0	20.8
35–44	24.2	24.2	24.2	21.4
45–54	24.8	24.2	24.5	21.7
55–64	15.5	13.8	14.7	15.4
65+	4.0	3.1	3.6	4.0
<b>Highest level of education</b>				
Non-school qualification	75.3	68.3	71.9	60.2
Secondary school	24.7	31.7	28.1	39.8
<b>Occupation</b>				
Manager	15.6	10.8	13.3	13.5
Professional	19.4	26.9	23.0	20.3
Technician/trade	22.9	1.9	12.8	14.4
Community/personal service	14.8	26.7	20.5	9.7
Clerical and administrative	4.8	18.4	11.4	15.2
Sales	5.6	9.9	7.7	9.0
Machinery operators	7.9	0.6	4.4	6.2
Labourers	9.0	4.8	7.0	11.5
<b>Work status</b>				
Full-time (35+ hrs per week)	79.9	49.3	65.1	65.4
Part-time (< 35 hrs per week)	20.1	50.7	34.9	34.6

Note. <sup>a</sup>Includes persons aged 15 – 17 years. ABS data sources: ABS Cat. No. 6227.0 Education and Work Australia, May 2010; ABS Cat. No. 6202.0 - Labour Force, Australia, March 2012, Time series spreadsheet, labour force status by sex – South Australia; ABS Cat. No. 6291.0.55.001 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed - Electronic Delivery, Mar 2012 ; ABS Cat. No. 6291.0.55.003 - Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, Feb 2012, Employed Persons by Sex, Occupation, State, Status in Employment.

Table 3 shows the household and family structure of AWALI SA respondents compared with the national AWALI sample. Most respondents in SA were living in a household with two or more adults (82.9 per cent) and 48.1 per cent of households contained one or more children. In households with children, most children were of school age. Of those respondents who had children, 35.1 per cent had a child aged four or younger.

Table 3 Household structure in the AWALI 2012 sample (per cent)

	SA 2012	Aust. 2012
<b>Adults in household</b>		
1 adult	17.1	17.3
2 or more adults	82.9	82.7
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married/de facto	66.0	60.7
Divorced, separated, never married or widowed	34.0	39.3
<b>Children in household</b>		
No children	51.9	54.1
1 child	18.3	18.5
2–3 children	27.2	25.2
4 or more children	2.6	2.2
<b>Ages of children<sup>1,2</sup> (parents only)</b>		
≤ 4	35.1	31.7
5–12	55.8	51.5
13–17	45.9	47.6
<b>Type of household</b>		
Single parent	4.4	3.4
Couple with children	40.9	38.2
Single no children	26.1	27.1
Couple no children	28.7	31.3

Note. <sup>1</sup>Percentage as proportion of respondents with children in the household. <sup>2</sup>Total is greater than 100 as many respondents had children in more than one age group.

### Section 3: An overview of work-life interference in South Australia 2012

To provide an overview of South Australians' work-life interference, we start by considering men's and women's responses on each of the five work-life items that comprise the work-life index, as well as scores on the overall index measure. Men and women often have very different experiences of putting together their work, home and community lives. Managing long hours in paid work is a more common challenge for men, whereas women are more likely to experience the strains and pressures of combining shorter hours in paid work with primary responsibility for unpaid care and domestic work (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2009; Budlender, 2010; Sayer, England, Bittman, & Bianchi, 2009). Here we examine similarities and differences in men's and women's experiences of combining paid work with other life activities in general, and within full-time and part-time employment.

#### Work-life interference in 2012: Individual work-life index items

As Table 4 shows, around one quarter of South Australian workers feel that work frequently (often/almost always) interferes with life outside work such as family time, social and other activities. Work interfering with community connections and relationships is less common – with around 18 per cent of workers reporting frequent work-community interference. On the other hand, chronic time pressure (frequently feeling rushed and pressed for time) is common. Nearly 57 per cent of women, and just over 42 per cent of men, feel chronic time pressure. Nevertheless, the majority of South Australians are satisfied with their work-life balance. These patterns have remained stable from 2010 to 2012, and are also comparable to the national AWALI 2012 survey. There are no statistically significant differences between these three data collections.

Table 4 Work-life interference by gender, SA 2012 (per cent)

	SA 2010 Often/almost always	SA 2012 Often/almost always	National 2012 Often/almost always)
<b>Work interferes with activities outside work</b>			
Men	23.5	23.5	26.1
Women	18.7	22.5	23.4
All	21.2	23.0	24.9
<b>Work interferes with enough time with family or friends</b>			
Men	27.3	27.8	29.8
Women	22.0	25.1	24.5
All	24.7	26.6	27.4
<b>Work interferes with community connections</b>			
Men	17.2	18.6	19.5
Women	14.6	17.9	17.8
All	15.9	18.3	18.8
<b>Feel rushed or pressed for time</b>			
Men	47.4	42.3	48.9
Women	59.5	56.9	59.5
All	53.3	49.0	53.8
<b>Satisfaction with WLB</b>			
	Satisfied	Satisfied	Satisfied
Men	69.2	67.2	68.8
Women	66.1	64.2	69.5
All	67.7	65.8	69.1

Note. Response scale on all items except satisfaction scale was never, rarely, sometimes, often, almost always. Data in table is combined responses of often and almost always responses.

We turn now to consider how full-time and part-time workers experience their work-life relationship. Considering these groups separately provides a useful insight into men’s and women’s work-life experiences when they are working similar hours. The focus here is patterns of high work-life interference (often/almost always responses). More detailed data is provided in the Appendix (Figures A1 – A10).

*Work interference with activities outside work*

Work frequently interferes with activities outside work for around one quarter of SA full-time workers, with no statistically significant difference between men and women (Figure 3).

Compared to Australian workers in general, SA men are less likely to report frequent work-life interference on this measure. Although the same trend is evident for women, this contrast is not statistically significant. Indeed SA women working full-time are more likely to report frequent work interference with life activities in 2012 than 2010, whereas men’s scores on this measure have remained stable over the past two years. As expected, frequent work-life interference is substantially lower for part-time workers – only around 17 per cent of SA workers in part-time jobs report work frequently interferes with their activities outside work (Figure 4).

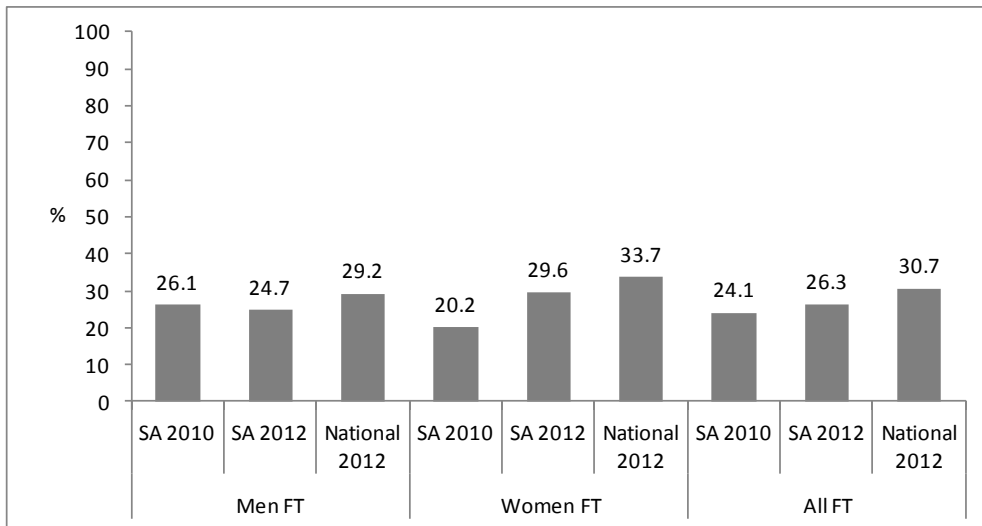


Figure 3 Work often/almost always interferes with activities outside work, full-time employed persons



Figure 4 Work often/almost always interferes with activities outside work, part-time employed persons

### *Work-related time restrictions with family and friends*

Work-related time restrictions are slightly more common, with around 30 per cent of SA full-time workers reporting that work frequently restricts their family and social time, with little difference between men and women (Figure 5). Although there is some evidence that SA women are less likely to report frequent time restrictions than the national average for women in full-time work, this contrast did not reach statistical significance.

Again, part-time workers are much less likely to report frequent work-related restrictions on social time (Figure 6), and there are no statistically significant differences over time (SA AWALI 2010, 2012) or between the SA and national AWALI 2012 results.

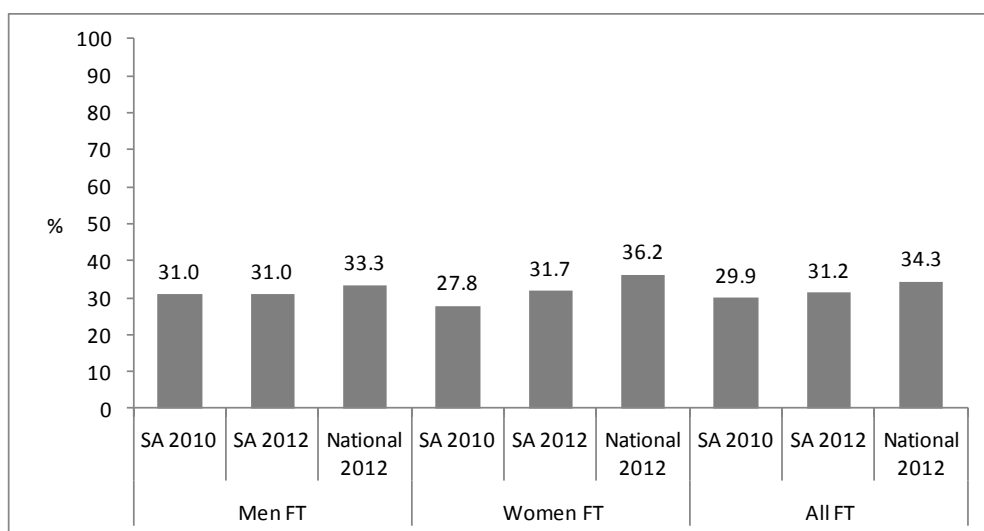


Figure 5 Work often/almost always restricts time with family/friends, full-time employed persons



Figure 6 Work often/almost always restricts time with family/friends, part-time employed persons

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size.

### *Work interference with community connections*

Work interferes with the capacity to interact with community for around one quarter of SA full-time workers, with no significant gender differences (Figure 7). There has also been an increase in this type of work-community interference from 2010, but only for women in full-time work.

Rates of work-community interference for full-time workers are comparable in SA AWALI 2012 to the national average. This type of work-life interference is rare for part-timers; around 10 per cent report frequent work-community interference (Figure 8).

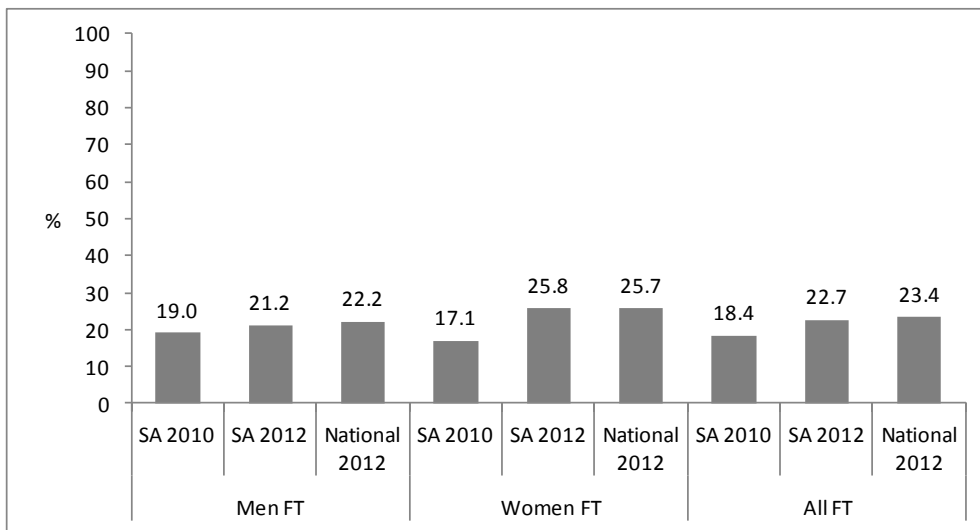


Figure 7 Work often/almost always interferes with community connections, full-time employed persons  
 Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size.



Figure 8 Work often/almost always interferes with community connections, part-time employed persons  
 Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size.

### *Rushed and pressed for time*

Compared to the other types of work-life interference, general time pressure – feeling rushed and pressed for time – is much more common (Figure 9). This is the case in SA as well as in the national AWALI 2012 data. Around 70 per cent of women in full-time work are likely to be chronically time pressured. This represents an increase from 2010, when 60 per cent of women in full-time work reported chronic time pressure, however this contrast was only of borderline statistical significance ( $p = .08$ ), hence this should be interpreted with caution. Nevertheless, this finding does indicate an increase in time pressure for women in full-time work in SA, which was below the national average in AWALI 2010 but is now comparable to the national average in



AWALI 2012. In contrast, chronic time pressure for men in full-time work has remained stable from 2010 to 2012, and is lower than the national average for AWALI 2012.

There has also been a reduction in chronic time pressure for women in part-time work from around 60 per cent in 2010 to 45.7 per cent in 2012. This rate of chronic time pressure is still substantially higher for women than for men working part-time. For these men there has been little change in time pressure from AWALI 2010, and no significant difference to the national average.

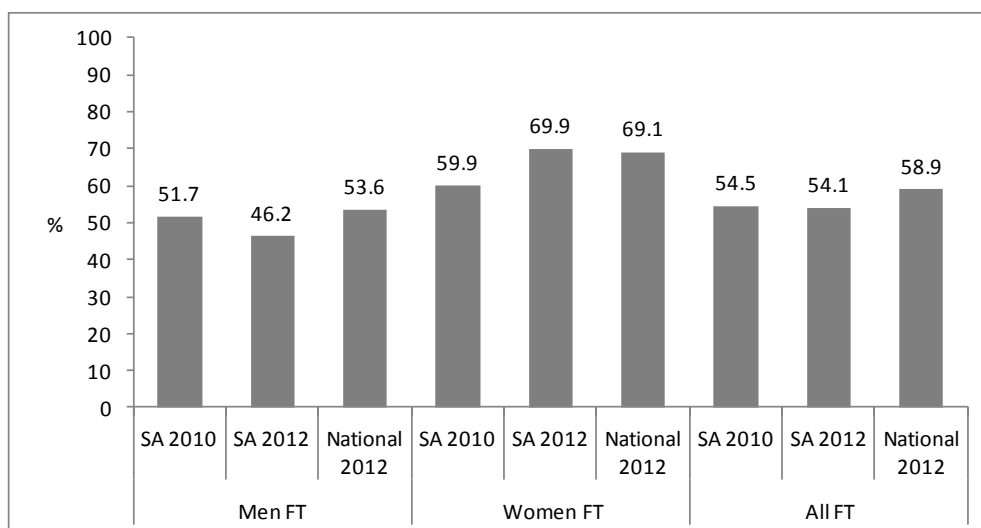


Figure 9 Often/almost always rushed or pressed for time, full-time employed persons

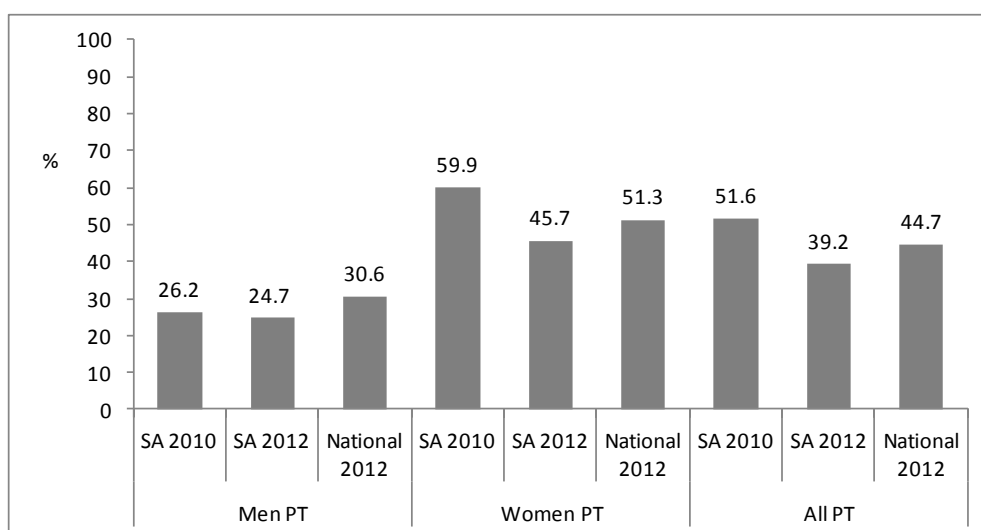


Figure 10 Often/almost always rushed or pressed for time, part-time employed persons

### *Satisfaction with work-life balance*

Overall, the majority of full-time workers in SA are satisfied with their work-life balance (61.2 per cent), with no significant difference to the national average. As with time pressure, women in full-time work also report poorer satisfaction with work-life balance (Figure 11). Indeed, SA men's satisfaction with their work-life balance has remained relatively steady from 2010 to 2012 and is comparable with the national average. There is some indication of a decline in the satisfaction of women in full-time work with work-life balance; however this contrast with 2010 results did not reach statistical significance. Similarly the contrast with the national average for

2012 was of borderline statistical significance ( $p = .07$ ). Therefore, no firm interpretations or conclusions can be made regarding these contrasts.

Three quarters of part-time workers in SA are satisfied with their work-life balance (Figure 12), with no statistically significant differences between men and women, nor with the 2010 AWALI findings and the national average.

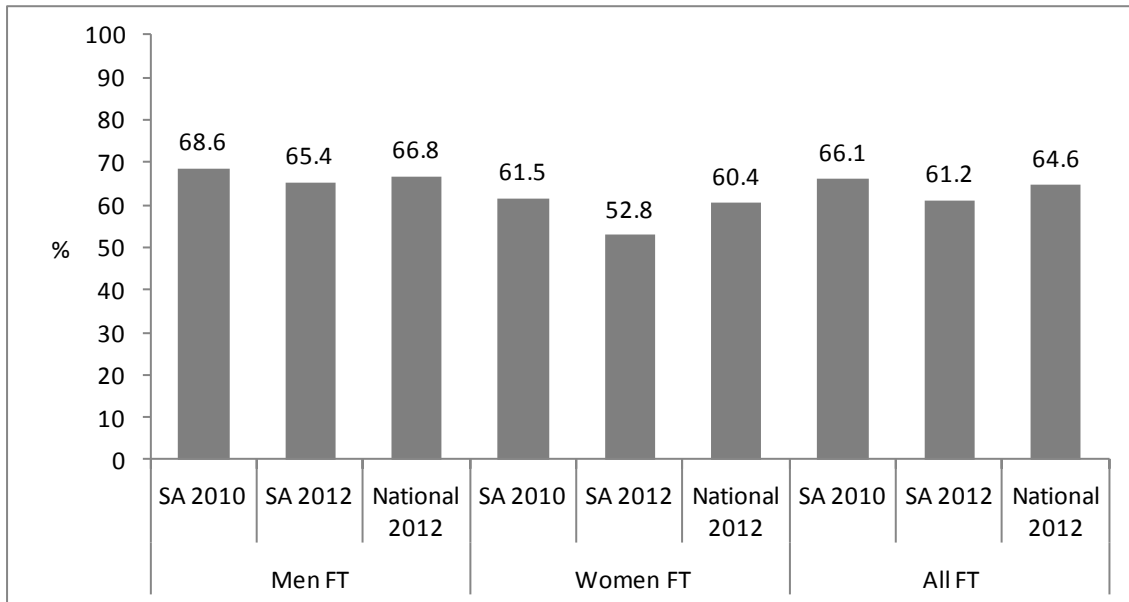


Figure 11 Somewhat/very satisfied with work-life balance, full-time employed persons

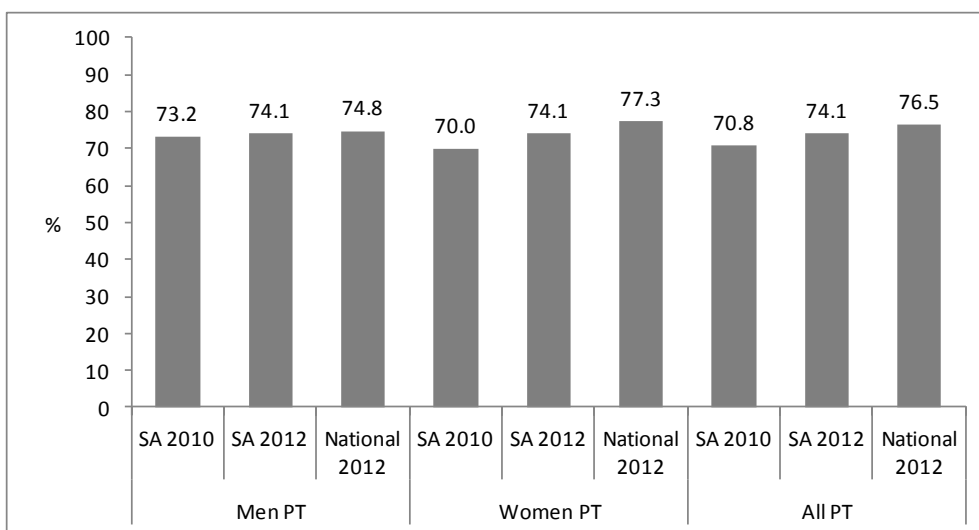


Figure 12 Somewhat/very satisfied with work-life balance, part-time employed persons

### South Australians' work-life interference in 2010 and 2012: The work-life index

In this section we report on the work-life index, which is a composite measure of work-life interference that combines the five separate items previously discussed. The index is scaled from 0 (lowest work-life interference) to 100 (highest work-life interference). The index provides an overall indication of the magnitude of work-life interference. We examine index scores for the SA workforce overall and separately for full-time and part-time workers. Appendix Table A1 provides the 95% confidence intervals for each of the SA 2012 index scores provided below.

As Figure 13 shows, there is little change in work-life interference for SA men from 2010 to 2012. When statistically adjusted for the effects of working hours, SA men report slightly lower work-life interference than the national average. In contrast, SA women report higher work-life interference than the national average, and this is the case for unadjusted and adjusted index scores. There is also evidence of a slight increase in SA women’s work-life interference from 2010 to 2012.

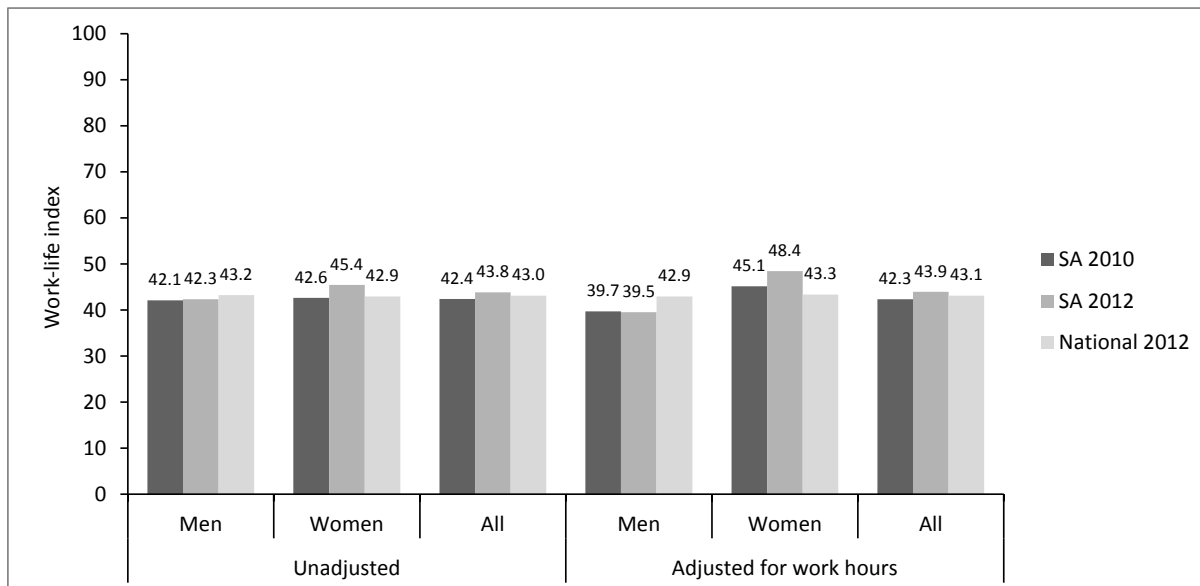


Figure 13 Work-life index scores (unadjusted and adjusted for working hours) by gender

Similar gender patterns are evident for full-time workers. Women working full-time have higher work-life interference than men, and this is the case in SA and nationally (Figure 14). They also report higher work-life interference in 2012 than 2010, although the index score of women in full-time work is not significantly different from the 2012 national average. The index scores for men in full-time work have remained steady from 2010 to 2012, and are comparable to the national average.

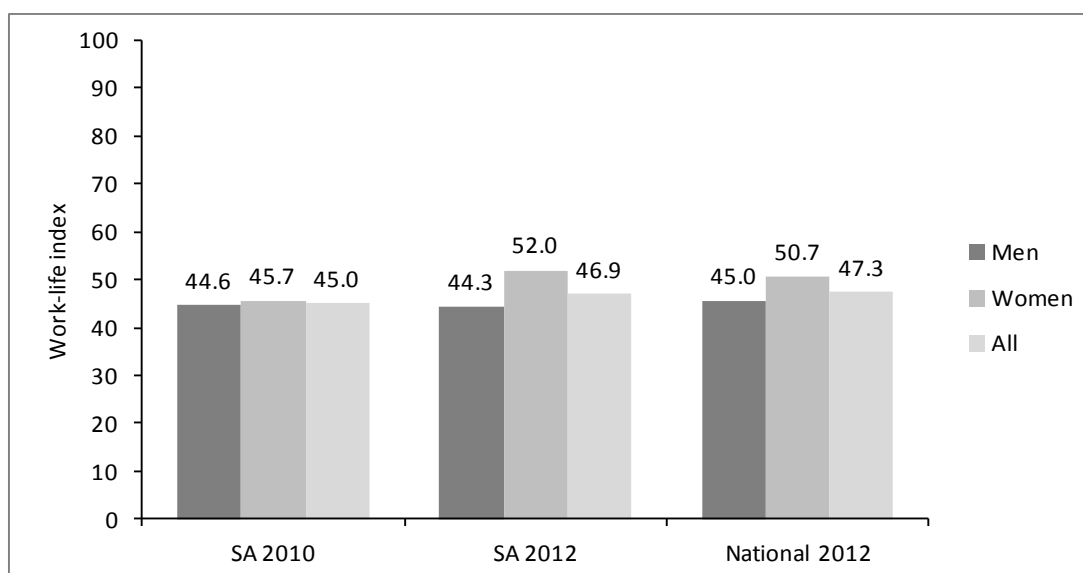


Figure 14 Work-life index scores for full-time employed persons by gender

As observed previously, work-life interference is substantially lower for part-time workers (Figure 15). As observed for men in full-time work, men working part-time report consistent levels of work-life interference between 2010 and 2012, and at comparable levels to the national average. For women working part-time, there is evidence of an increase in work-life interference, although the contrast between 2010 and 2012 did not reach statistical significance. However, SA women working part-time report slightly higher levels of work-life interference than the national average.

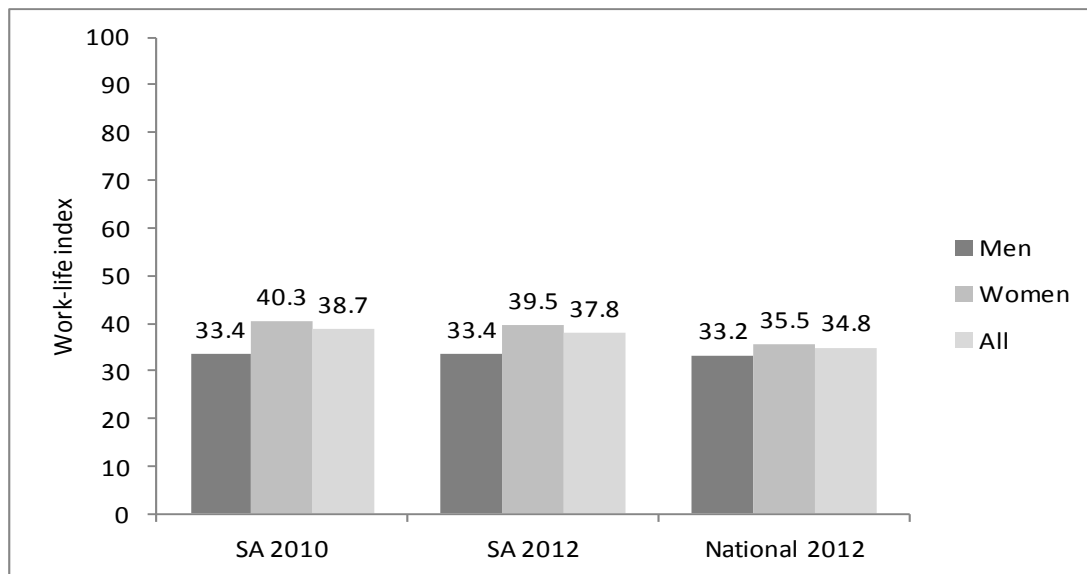


Figure 15 Work-life index scores for part-time employed persons by gender

### Overview of key findings

There are mixed results on SA workers' work-life interference in AWALI 2012. Whilst the majority of SA workers are satisfied with their work-life balance, around 25 to 30 per cent of workers do experience frequent work-life interference. Chronic time pressure is more common – especially for women, over half of whom report frequent feeling rushed and pressed for time.

SA men have much lower work-life interference than SA women and:

- They are less likely to report work frequently interferes with life outside of work, compared to the national average;
- Their score on the overall work-life index is lower than the national average.

SA women's work-life balance has either remained stable or slightly worsened for those working full-time. Poorer work-life balance for SA women in full-time work includes:

- An increase from AWALI 2010 to 2012 in work-community interference and chronic time pressure;
- Slightly higher scores on the work-life index in 2012 than 2010 (also the case for part-time women).

As observed in the national AWALI 2012 survey, women consistently report higher work-life interference than men, in both part-time and full-time work. As expected, part-time workers have substantially lower work-life interference than their full-time counterparts.

## Section 4: Working hours and the ‘fit’ between actual and preferred hours

As we observed in the previous section, working hours are a strong influence on work-life interference, particularly when we compare the experience of part-time and full-time workers. In this section we engage in a closer examination of working time, both the length of working hours and the extent to which these hours fit with preferences. Both dimensions of working time are important with regard to work-life and other wellbeing outcomes.

In this report we define long hours as 48+ hours per week, which is consistent with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition of 48+ hours as ‘very long’, and the European Parliament’s Working Time Directive, which places an upper limit on weekly working hours of 48 hours (including overtime) for workers in the European Union. We also consider the extent to which working hours fit with preferences, using a difference of four or more hours between actual and preferred working hours to define a ‘poor fit’ of hours with preferences. This represents a mismatch of around half a day’s work, which we argue is substantial in workers either having too much (longer hours than preferred) or too little (fewer hours than preferred) paid work. Indeed, there is evidence that the extent to which working hours fit with preferences, rather than length of hours per se, is the stronger predictor of health and wellbeing outcomes (Barnett, 2006; Wooden, Warren, & Drago, 2009). As the association between length of working hours and work-life interference is relatively well established, in this section we focus on patterns of how working hours fit with preferences.

### Shorter and longer part-time and full-time hours

Gendered patterns of working time are well established. In SA, as in Australia in general, men are more likely to work full-time and long full-time hours, whereas women are more likely to work part-time (Figure 16).

There has not been any significant change in these patterns of working hours in SA from AWALI 2010 to 2012. It is interesting to note that SA men are less likely to work long full-time hours than the national average (31.2 per cent), but are more likely to work 35–47 full-time hours than the national average (47.6 per cent). This may account for the finding that SA men report lower work-life interference than Australian men in general, as observed in Section 3. SA women’s patterns of working hours are consistent with the national average.

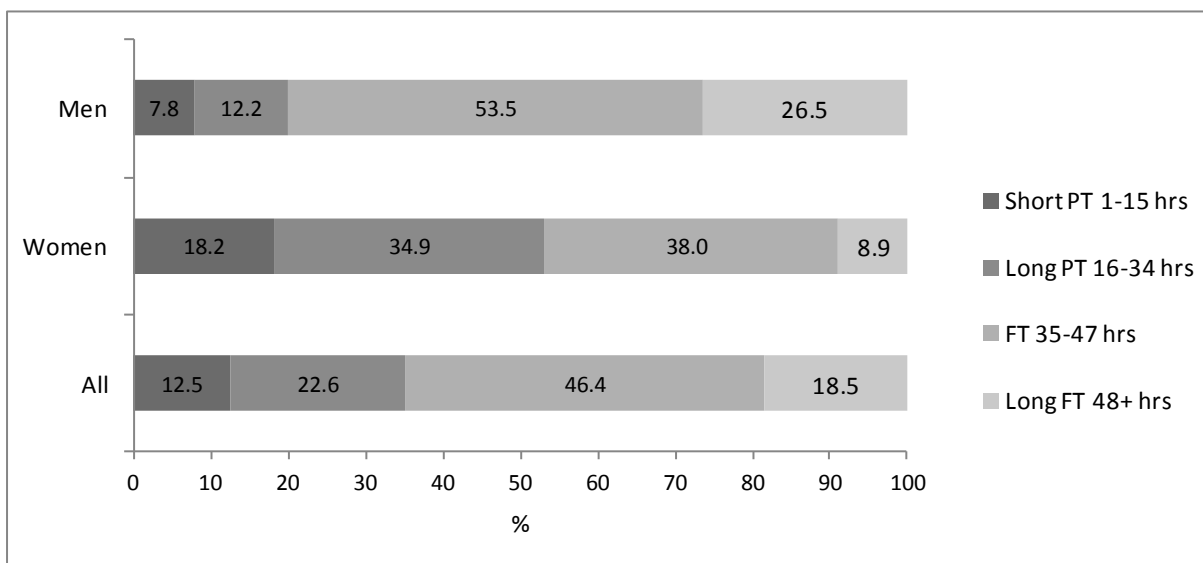


Figure 16 Short and long working hours by gender (per cent)

### Work-life index scores

As Figure 17 shows, there is a clear relationship between longer hours and worse work-life interference. Further, in each working-time categories below, women have higher work-life interference than men. These patterns are consistently observed in previous SA AWALI surveys and the national survey. There are no significant differences between the SA 2012 survey and the SA 2010 or the national 2012 survey, with one exception. Women working 35–47 hours have higher work-life interference in 2012 (49.2) than 2010 (42.5) (the same trend is evident for women working 48+ hours, but is not statistically significant possibly due to small sample sizes).

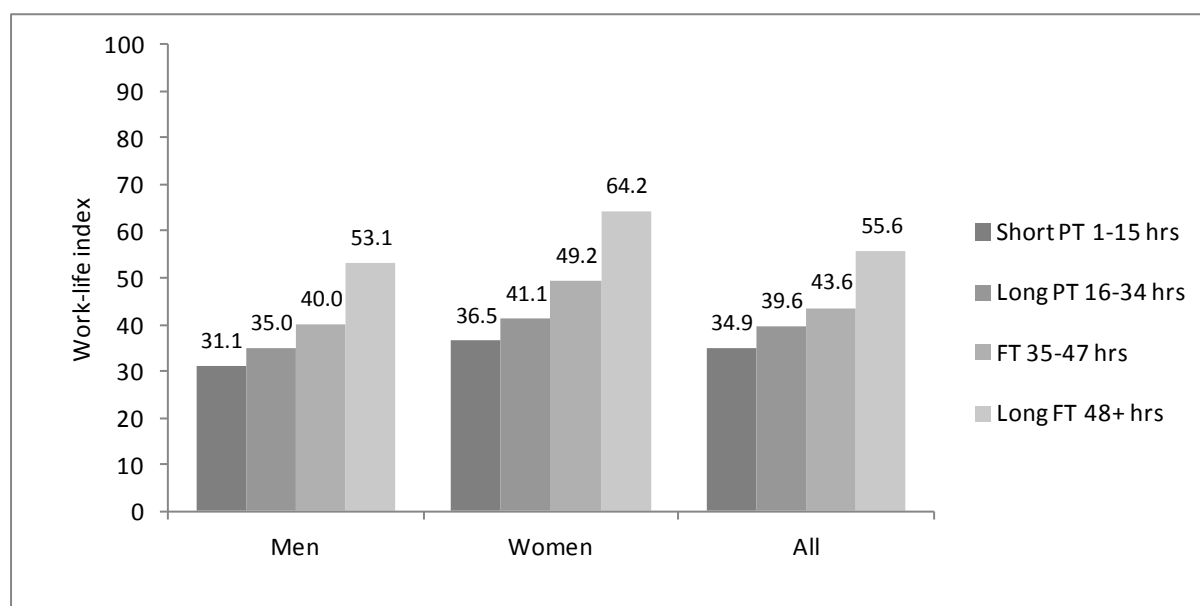


Figure 17 Work-life index scores by short and long working hours and gender

### Actual and preferred working hours

We now turn to a second important dimension of working time – the extent to which working hours fit with preferences. Table 5 provides an overview of SA workers’ actual and preferred working hours and the degree of fit between them. Men and women in full-time work would prefer, on average, to work about seven hours fewer a week, with preferred working week hours of around 40 for men and 35 for women. Men working part-time would prefer to increase their working week by a similar amount, whereas women working part-time have a much closer fit of working hours with their preferences.

There are no significant differences in actual or preferred hours or their fit with working hours between SA AWALI 2012 and both the SA 2010 and national 2012 AWALI surveys.

### The ‘fit’ between actual and preferred hours

We turn now to examining working hours fit with preferences using a different metric, applying the threshold of four or more hours mismatch (i.e. workers prefer to work 4+ hours longer or fewer), to identify which social and employment groups are likely to have a good or poor fit with working hours preferences.

#### Men and women

As Figure 18 shows, just over half of SA workers do not have a good fit between their actual and preferred hours. Most of those workers – 38.0 per cent overall – would prefer to work at least half a day less, with little difference between men and women. There are no significant differences in findings between these results and the SA 2010 survey or the national 2012 survey.

Table 5 Actual and preferred working hours by gender

	Actual working hours	Preferred working hours	Working hours fit
<b>Men</b>			
Full-time	45.7	39.6	6.7
Part-time	18.9	26.1	-6.2
Total	40.8	37.2	4.4
<b>Women</b>			
Full-time	42.2	34.5	7.7
Part-time	20.2	22.8	-2.0
Total	30.5	28.4	2.6
<b>All</b>			
Full-time	44.5	37.9	7.1
Part-time	19.8	23.7	-3.1
Total	35.9	33.0	3.5

Note. Working hours mismatch = actual minus preferred hours. A positive score occurs when actual hours exceed preferred hours, and a negative score when actual hours are fewer than preferred hours.

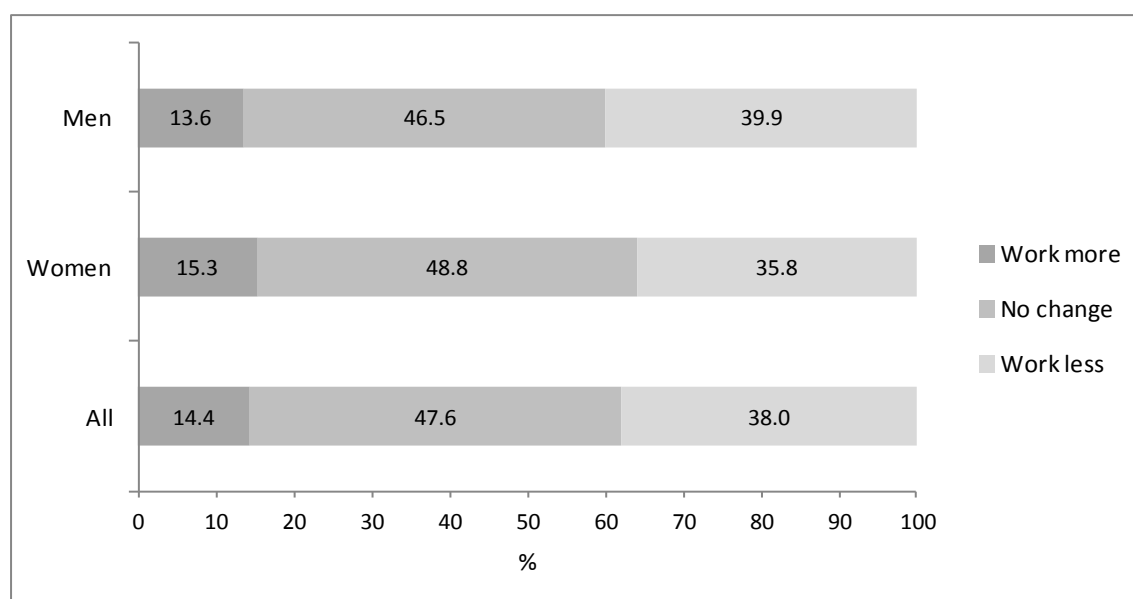


Figure 18 Working hours fit with preferences by gender (per cent)

Note. No change = 0 – 3 hours gap between preferred and actual hours. Work more = prefer to work 4 or more hours more than actual hours. Work less = prefer to work 4 or more hours fewer than actual hours.

### *Part-time and full-time workers*

As Figure 19 shows, around half of those working either part-time or full-time (35–47) hours, have a good fit (within three hours) between their actual and preferred working hours. Around one third of part-time workers would prefer to work at least half a day longer, a preference that is rare for full-time workers (less than five per cent). This preference for longer hours is more common for men in part-time work (49.4 per cent) than women (28.0 per cent). A preference to work at least half a day less is common for full-time workers, indeed three quarters of those working long full time hours (48+) want to work less. Women in full-time work are more likely to prefer fewer hours than men, and this is the case for those working 35–47 hours (56.1 per cent of women; 36.5 per cent of men) or 48+ hours (72.7 per cent of men; 87.1 per cent of women).

There has been little change in these patterns from the SA AWALI 2010 survey, and there is no significant difference with the national AWALI 2012 findings.

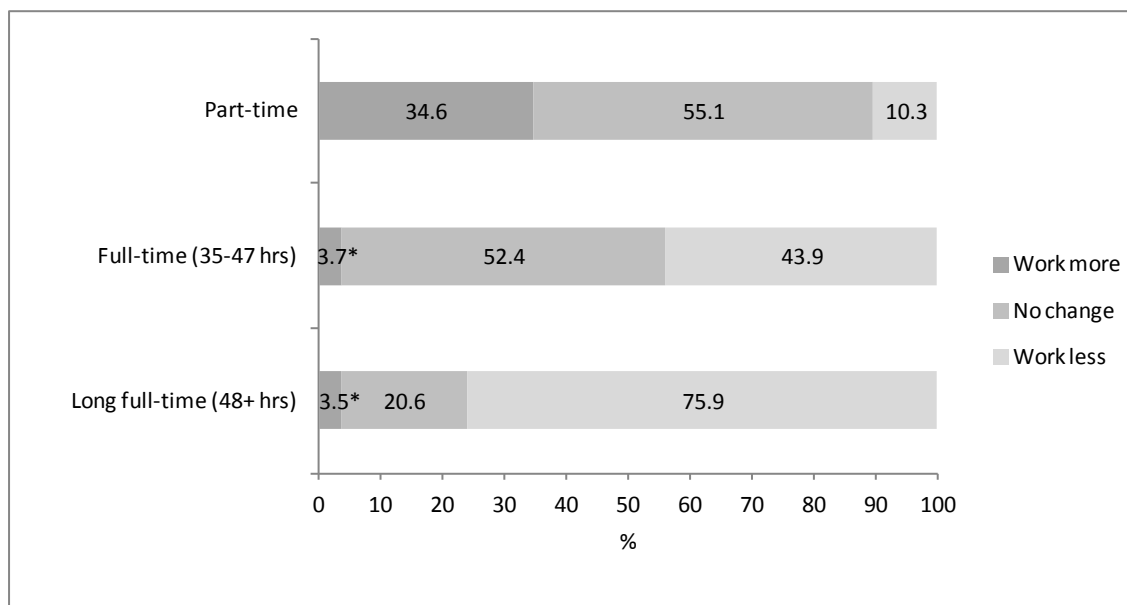


Figure 19 Working hours fit with preferences by working hours (per cent)

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size. No change = 0 – 3 hours gap between preferred and actual hours. Work more = prefer to work 4 or more hours more than actual hours. Work less = prefer to work 4 or more hours fewer than actual hours.

### Full-time workers' preference to change to part-time hours

The previous analyses show that a preference to work fewer hours is common for full-time workers. Another indicator of the extent to which working hours are experienced as too long is to consider full-time workers' preference to change to part-time work, which represents a substantial change to both working hours and also earning potential.

As

Table 6 shows, a substantial proportion of women working full-time (41.7 per cent) would prefer to work part-time compared to only 15.2 per cent of men. This increases to 50.0 per cent of mothers in full-time work (36.4 per cent of women without children). In contrast, fathers in full-time work are less likely to prefer part-time hours (12.0 per cent) than men without children (18.6 per cent).

These patterns are comparable to both the findings of the SA 2010 survey and the national AWALI 2012 survey with one exception. Full-time (SA) women in 2012 are more likely to prefer part-time work (41.7 per cent) than in 2010 (31.8 per cent).

Table 6 Full-time workers' preference to work part-time by gender (per cent)

	Prefer part-time	Prefer full-time
Men	15.2	84.8
Women	41.7	58.3
All	24.1	75.9



## Working hours fit with preferences by parenting status

Here we examine working hours fit with preferences for men and women with and without children. As we have observed previously, men are more likely to be in full-time employment, and to work longer full-time hours, than women. Indeed, 85.0 per cent of fathers are in full-time work compared to 42.3 per cent of mothers (see Appendix Table A2 for average working hours). Almost 1 in 3 (28.5 per cent) of fathers work long hours (48+ hours) compared to less than 1 in 10 (8.0 per cent) of mothers.

Yet, as Figure 20 shows, despite these substantial differences in working hours, there is very little difference in the extent to which hours fit with preferences for mothers and fathers, or for men and women without children. Indeed none of these contrasts reached statistical significance. Regardless of parenting status, around 45 to 50 per cent of men and women have a good fit between their actual and preferred working hours, whereas around 40 per cent would prefer to work at least half a day less.

These patterns are similar to the SA AWALI 2010 and national 2012 survey with one exception. Women with children are more likely to prefer fewer hours in 2012 (39.2 per cent) than in 2010 (29.0 per cent).

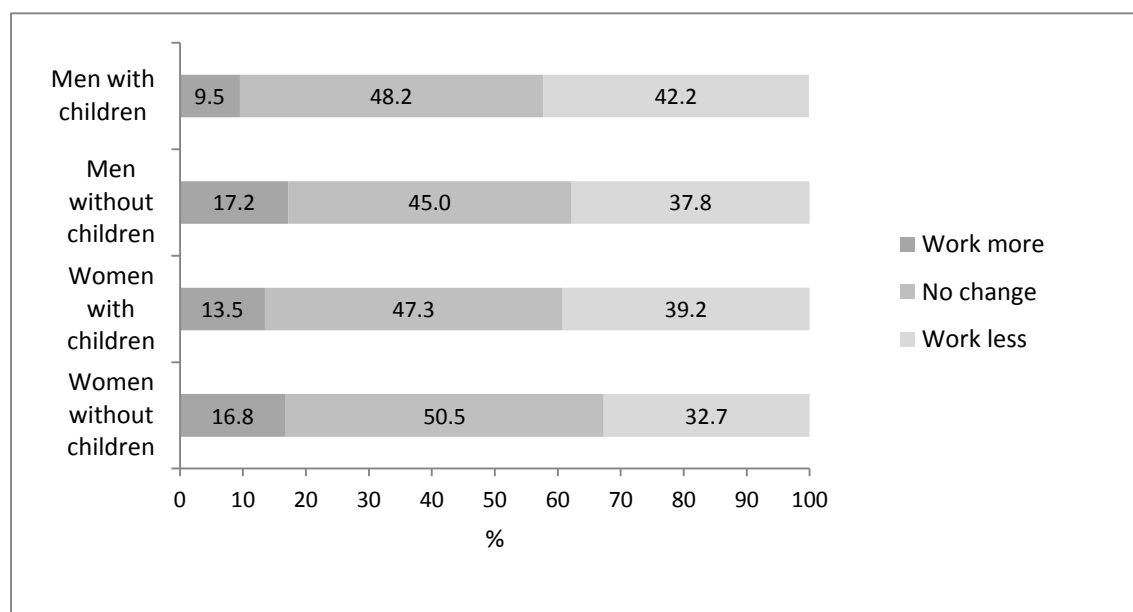


Figure 20 Working hours fit with preferences by parenting status and gender (per cent)

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size. No change = 0 – 3 hours gap between preferred and actual hours. Work more = prefer to work 4 or more hours more than actual hours. Work less = prefer to work 4 or more hours fewer than actual hours.

In the AWALI 2010 report we considered different types of households, distinguishing between partnered and un-partnered men and women with and without children. However, the distribution of the AWALI 2012 SA sample did not support this analysis, particularly due to small numbers of sole parents.

## Work-life interference and hours ‘fit’ with preferences

There is a clear relationship between working longer hours than preferred and higher work-life interference (Figure 21). Indeed, work-life interference is similar for those with a good working hours’ fit with preferences and for those who would prefer more hours. For men, work-life scores are very similar for those working longer than preferred or working long hours (48+). Whereas for women, working long hours (48+) has a stronger negative impact on work-life interference (index score = 64.2, Figure 17).

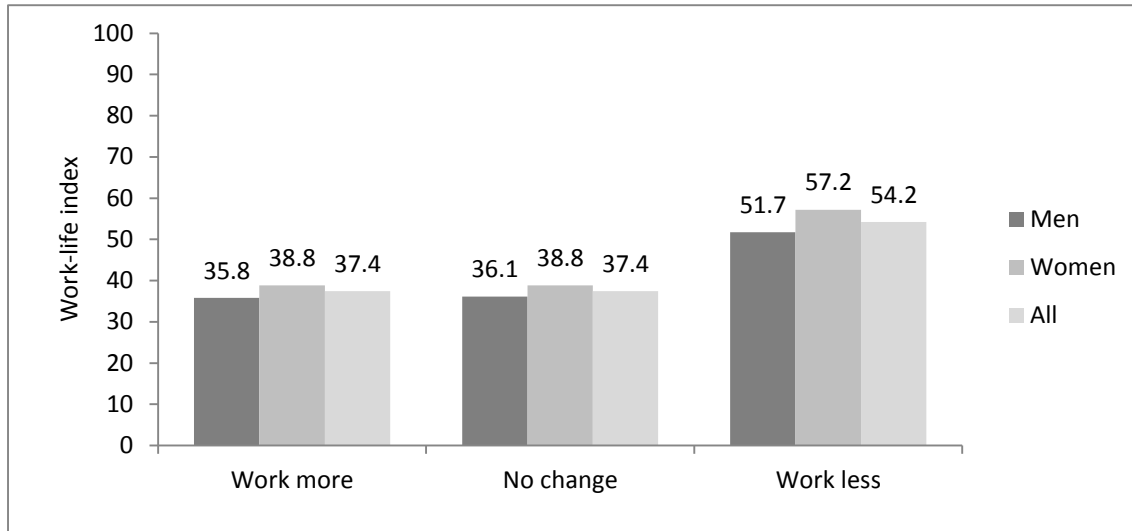


Figure 21 Work-life index scores by working hours fit

Note. No change = 0 – 3 hours gap between preferred and actual hours. Work more = prefer to work 4+ more hours than actual hours. Work less = prefer to work 4 or more hours fewer than actual hours.

## Overview of key findings

Working hours and their fit with preferences are two well-established influences on work-life interference. There are also well-established gender patterns around working times:

- As with Australia in general, men in SA work longer hours than women; they are more likely to be in full-time work and to work longer full-time hours;
- Longer working hours have a stronger negative impact on women’s work-life interference.

When we consider the extent to which these working hours fit with preferences, there is evidence of an unmet need for a shorter working week:

- Men and women working full-time would prefer to work at least 7 hours less per week;
- Men in part-time work would prefer to work 6 hours more per week, and women 2 hours;
- 38 per cent of workers would prefer to work at least half a day less, with little difference between men and women.

Those in full-time work are most likely to prefer fewer hours:

- 43.0 per cent of full-time workers working 35–47 hours would prefer to work at least half a day less;
- Three quarters of those working long hours (75.9 per cent) would like also like to work half a day less.

Many women (41.7 per cent) working full-time would prefer to make a substantial change by moving to part-time work.

Around 40 per cent of parents would prefer to work at least half a day less; this is the case for mothers and fathers despite substantial differences in their working hours.

There is a clear relationship between working longer hours than preferred and higher work-life interference.

These patterns are very similar to the AWALI SA 2010 survey and the national 2012 survey with two exceptions that provide further evidence of increasing work-life pressures for SA women:

- Women with children are more likely to prefer fewer hours in 2012 than 2010;
- Women in full-time work in 2012 are more likely to prefer part-time work than in 2010.

## Section 5: Social characteristics and work-life interference

In the analyses so far we focused on describing South Australian men's and women's work-life arrangements and experiences, examining measures of work-life interference, length of working hours and their fit with preferences. In this section we continue to compare and contrast men's and women's experiences as we consider additional social characteristics that can impact on the way our working lives are arranged, experienced and impact life outside of work. Specifically, we examine how age, parenting status, household income and geographic location (urban, rural/regional) are associated with work-life interference.

### Age

Here we consider how work-life interference differs across the life course, from young people who are often studying or in the early stages of their careers, to those in their 30s and 40s who are consolidating career paths and trajectories, while many older workers are moving into transition to retirement. Family dynamics and composition also differ across these age groups. For many there is a transition from pre-family formation, to family formation and early years of parenting, to the parenting of young adults living in the family home. It is well established that for workers aged in their thirties and forties, the combination of peak periods of activity in work and family domains is particularly associated with work-life strains.

Working hours also fluctuate across the life course. Excluding those in the youngest and oldest age groups, men's average working hours are consistently between 41 and 44 hours across age groups, and women's between 30 and 34 hours (see Appendix Table A3).

It is useful to statistically control these differences in working hours to examine the unique effects of age (independent of working hours) on work-life interference. As Figure 22 shows, in each age group women consistently report higher work-life conflict than men. Women's work-life interference remains stable and high (above average) from ages 18 through to 44, decreases in mid-age and then again in older age. Men's work-life interference shows a different pattern, remaining steady and at around the SA sample average from ages 18 to 54, and then decreasing across the highest two age categories.

These patterns mirror those observed in the SA 2010 survey and the national 2012 AWALI survey, with no statistically significant differences.

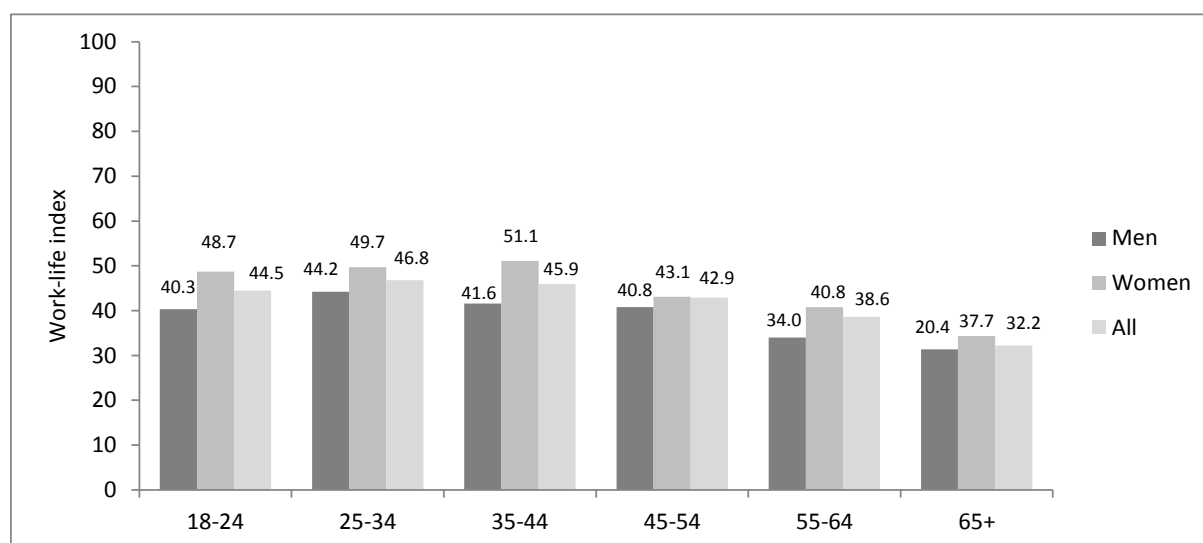


Figure 22 Work-life index scores by age and gender

Note. Index scores adjusted for working hours.

## Parenting

As observed in Section 4, there are well established patterns of working hours for men and women with parenting responsibilities, with fathers working substantially longer hour than mothers. Whether we account for these differences in working hours or not, mothers have higher work-life interference than fathers (Figure 23), indicating that parenting responsibilities are associated with greater difficulties and strains in combining work and care for women than men. These patterns, of course, are not unique to South Australia, but rather reflect the predominant patterns in Australia as a whole and other similar countries. Work-life interference is comparable for men and women without children, although adjusting for working hours women without children still report worse work-life interference than men.

We previously observed that SA women report higher work-life interference in 2012 than in 2010, and also higher levels than the national average. These patterns can also be observed for women with or without children, although it must be acknowledged that the size of this contrast is modest and should not be over-interpreted.

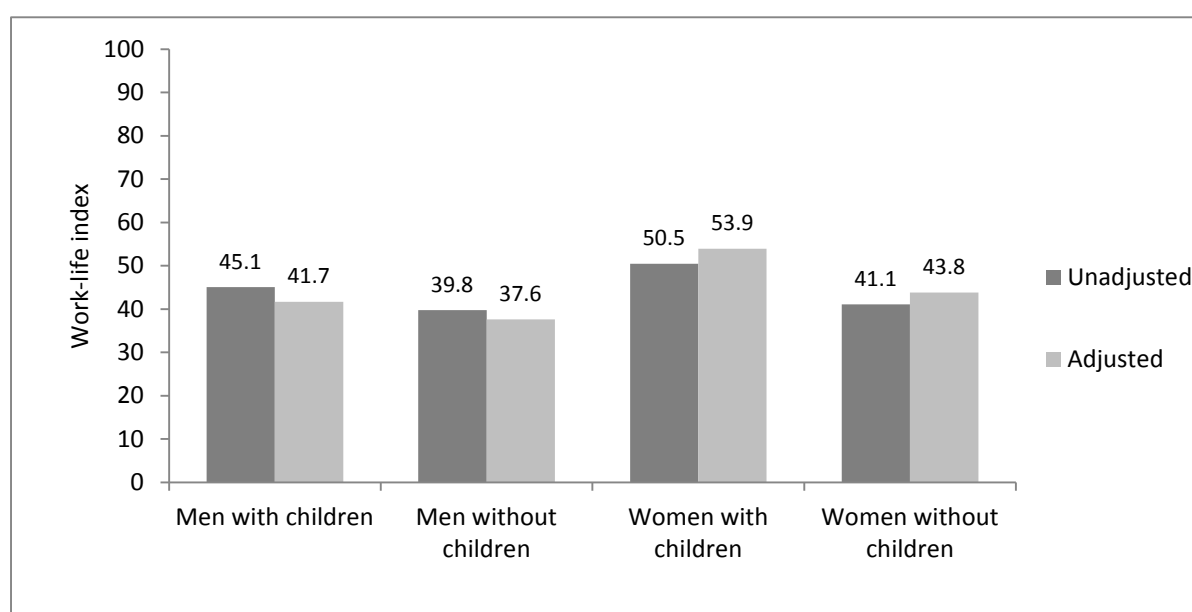


Figure 23 Work-life index scores by parenting status and gender

Note. Index scores adjusted or unadjusted for working hours.

## Household income

The income available to the members of a household can have both positive and negative implications for work-life balance. Benefits include economic security and the capacity to purchase goods and services that save time (e.g. cleaning, gardening, ready-made meals). On the other hand, a higher income usually means longer hours, and those with a higher income tend to be in managerial and professional occupations – groups of workers who are consistently observed to have high work-life conflict.

In the SA 2012 survey, as observed in 2010, there was a pattern of increasing work-life interference with higher household income, particularly between those with household incomes of greater than or less than \$60,000. This is mainly a function of working hours, as there is no significant difference between income groups on the adjusted index scores (controlling for the effect of working hours) (see Appendix Table A4). In the higher income groups (\$60,000+), women report higher work-life interference than men. Although these patterns are also evident in the lower income groups, statistical significance was not reached.

There were no significant differences on work-life interference in each of the income groups in 2012 compared to the SA 2010 and national 2012 studies.

### **Geographic location**

There were no significant differences in work-life interference according to geographic location, and this was the case for men and women.

### **Overview of key findings**

Of the social demographics considered in this section, it is not surprising that those characteristics that relate directly or indirectly to parenting responsibilities showed the strongest and most consistent association with work-life interference.

Work-life interference is higher for men and women with parenting responsibilities compared to those without children (aged under 18 years).

The impact of combining work and care on work-life interference is stronger for women, than men:

- Mothers report higher work-life interference than fathers, regardless of whether differences in working hours are statistically controlled or not;
- Women's work-life index scores are higher than the SA average from 18 – 44 years, whereas men's index scores are consistently lower than the SA average across age groups.

These patterns are not unique to South Australia, but reflect well established gendered patterns of work-life interaction observed in Australia and other similar countries.

No significant differences were observed in these patterns compared to the SA 2010 and national 2012 AWALI surveys.

## Section 6: Employment characteristics and work-life interference

In this section we consider how four key employment characteristics – occupation, industry, sector and size of firm – are related to work-life interference. Working hours and their scheduling, workplace cultures including gender balance, and the nature of work itself can vary substantially between occupations and industries. Work practices and cultures can also vary significantly between public, private and NGO sectors, even for workers in the same occupation or industry. Similarly, working in a large corporation can be a very different experience, and offer different resources and demands, than working in a small family business, for example. Here we examine how these factors – as represented by the four broad employment characteristics – impact on work-life interference for SA men and women.

### Occupation

There are substantial differences in working hours between different occupations in SA AWALI 2012, which are also reflected in higher or lower work-life interference (Table 7). Whilst occupational differences on the work-life index are statistically significant for the unadjusted scores, when differences in working hours are taken into account (adjusted scores), there is no statistically significant difference in work-life interference across occupational groups.

Table 7 Work-life index scores adjusted and unadjusted for working hours by occupation

	Working hours	Index (unadjusted)	Index (adjusted)
<b>Men</b>			
Managers	46.7	50.6	44.5
Professionals	41.8	44.4	41.1
Technicians & trades workers	42.7	41.3	37.5
Community & personal service	36.4	40.5	40.7
Clerical and administrative workers	37.0	37.8	37.1
Sales workers	28.1	35.6	39.8
Machinery operators and drivers	46.9	39.7	33.7
Labourers	36.1	39.6	39.5
<b>Women</b>			
Managers	38.1	49.0	47.8
Professionals	36.2	52.3	52.3
Technicians & trades workers	33.8	**	**
Community & personal service	27.1	43.6	48.4
Clerical and administrative workers	30.9	41.7	44.4
Sales workers	22.4	39.6	47.0
Machinery operators and drivers	30.0	**	**
Labourers	21.7	40.0	47.7
<b>All</b>			
Managers	43.3	50.0	46.2
Professionals	38.7	48.7	46.7
Technicians & trades workers	42.2	40.8	35.5
Community & personal service	30.5	42.5	44.6
Clerical and administrative workers	32.1	40.6	40.7
Sales workers	24.5	38.1	43.4
Machinery operators and drivers	45.7	41.9	52.6
Labourers	32.0	39.5	43.6

Note. \*\*Estimate not provided due to inadequate sample size.

Considering the unadjusted scores, managers and professionals are the only two occupational groups whose scores are above the SA average. This is the case for men and women. Indeed women in professional occupations report higher work-life interference than their male counterparts, regardless of adjustment for working hours. When adjusting for differences in working hours, women also report higher work-life interference than men in community and personal service, clerical and administrative, sales and labouring occupations.

## Industry

Working hours and work-life interference also differ across industry groups (Table 8). As noted earlier, there was a close match between longer average hours and higher work-life interference across occupational groups. However, the patterns observed for industry groups revealed that those working shorter working hours (e.g. long part-time hours) are amongst those with the highest work-life interference. The industry groups with work-life index scores above the SA 2012 average are education and training, health care and social services, and accommodation and food services. These industries share two common characteristics – they are female-dominated and involve providing services and care to clients and customers.

There was an insufficient number of SA respondents from the mining industry to support analysis of this group. Nevertheless, it is a consistent observation in the national AWALI surveys that mining workers are particularly at risk for high work-life interference.

These patterns are also evident in the SA 2010 and national 2012 surveys, with no statistically significant differences with the SA 2012 survey.

Table 8 Work-life index scores adjusted and unadjusted for working hours by industry

	Working hours	Index score unadjusted	Index score adjusted
Agriculture/forestry and fishing	41.5	43.0	40.0
Mining	**	**	**
Manufacturing	41.9	43.8	42.2
Electricity/gas water and waste services	43.5	32.3	13.8
Construction	43.0	42.0	37.9
Wholesale/retail trade	29.3	39.7	43.4
Accommodation and food services	28.7	45.5	50.4
Transport/postal and warehousing	40.3	43.2	45.2
Information media/telecommunications	34.3*	41.5*	42.2*
Financial and insurance services/real estate	39.4	39.5	37.1
Rental/hiring and real-estate	**	**	**
Professional/scientific and technical services	37.6	44.9	44.6
Administrative and support services	30.7	39.8	42.7
Public administration and safety	36.5	41.8	41.3
Education and training	36.6	48.8	46.8
Health care and social assistance	33.5	47.0	46.0
Arts and recreation services*	24.5*	43.0*	50.6*
Other services	43.9*	42.7*	37.6*

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size.



## Sector and firm size

As observed in the national 2012 AWALI survey, there are no significant differences in work-life interference across employment sectors (private, public, non-government). Nor are there any statistically significant differences in work-life interference according to the size of firms.

### Overview of key findings

There are clear patterns of work-life interference across occupational and industry groups.

Those most likely to experience high work-life interference are:

- Managers and professionals;
- Workers in female-dominated industries involving direct contact with people, such as clients or customers – education and training, health care and social services and accommodation and food services.

There has been little change in these patterns from SA AWALI 2010, and these are also consistent with the national 2012 survey.

Work-life interference does not differ significantly by employment sector (public, private, non-government) or size of firm.

## Section 6: Requesting flexibility

Access to employee-centred flexibility is well established in the research literature as a key resource to support a healthy work-life relationship and other positive health and wellbeing outcomes (Eby, et al., 2005; Pocock, et al., 2012). Employee-centred flexibility refers to individuals' capacity to exert some degree of control or influence over working time (e.g. length of working day, access to part-time work) and work scheduling (e.g. flexible start and finish times, days of week worked).

The role of flexible work practices in supporting work-life balance is also recognised by business and industry. Flexible work practices often form a central part of organisational policies on work-life balance.

There have been important and relatively recent legislative reforms that are designed to increase access to flexible work arrangements for some Australian workers. The National Employment Standards (NES) create a right for employees to request changes in working arrangements effective from 1 January 2010. This new right to request (RTR) represents a 'light touch' regulatory measure to support employees seeking flexibility, and it creates a duty for employers to consider such requests 'reasonably'. An employee who is a parent or carer for a child who is under school aged or a child under 18 with a disability, may ask their employer for a change in working arrangements to assist them to care for their child. Examples of such arrangements include changes in patterns of work and its location.

In this section we examine SA workers' requests for flexible work arrangements. Our focus here is on all requests for flexibility, not just those made under the RTR provisions. We describe the types of flexibility requests that workers made in the 12 months prior to the survey (March 2012), what they asked for and the reasons given for requesting flexibility. We also examine the outcomes of these requests – whether a request was fully or partially accepted or declined, and the resultant implications for work-life interference.

Where possible, we compare SA findings to the national 2012 AWALI data, identifying similarities and differences to national patterns of flexibility requesting (national AWALI 2012 survey). With one exception (reason for not making a request), there were either no significant differences between the SA and national data, or a statistical comparison was not possible due to sample size restrictions. There were restrictions on some analyses due to the low number of SA respondents who had made a flexibility request (70 men, 128 women). These are noted in the text below.

### Requests for a flexible work arrangement

As Table 9 shows, around 20 per cent of SA workers had made a request for a flexible work arrangement in the past 12 months, which is equivalent to the national average. SA women with children are much more likely to make a flexibility request than those without children, whereas parenting status makes little difference to men's request rates. Workers in the younger and mid-aged groups are more likely to make a request than older workers (45+ years), which most likely reflects their need to vary work arrangements to accommodate study or care/family commitments. Indeed, women with a preschool-aged child are most likely to make a flexibility request – 45.8 per cent of SA mothers compared to only 16.2 per cent of SA fathers. Similarly, the proportion of SA mothers who have requested flexibility is double that of SA fathers. As in the national data, these figures emphasize the importance of access to flexibility for women combining work and care. Furthermore, this data suggests that much more needs to be done to encourage and support men to access flexibility to better support their work-family and work-life balance. The patterns of requesting by gender, age and parental status are comparable to the national data, with no statistically significant differences.

Table 9 Made a request to change work arrangements by gender, age and parenting, (per cent)

	SA 2012	Aust 2012
All	19.8	20.6
Men	14.0	17.3
Women	26.6	24.2
Age		
18 – 24 years	29.6	31.3
25 – 34 years	22.4	24.0
35-44 years	25.2	22.6
45 -54 years	12.9	13.7
55 – 64 years	12.4*	13.8
65+ years	**	**
Preschool children (< 5 years)	27.3	29.6
Men	16.2*	19.8
Women	45.8	43.0
Children under 18 years		
Men	15.8	18.4
Women	32.2	30.9
No children under 18 years		
Men	12.7	16.4
Women	22.1	18.6

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size. \*\*Estimate not provided due to inadequate sample size.

### *Requests by working hours*

Flexibility requests are much more likely to be made by part-time than full-time workers (Table 10). Around 30 per cent of SA women working part-time had made such a request, compared to 22 per cent of their full-time counterparts. This is an important observation, as it is women in full-time work that are most likely to experience high levels of work-life conflict and time pressure (Section 3). Yet they are also less likely to request a change to their work arrangements to better support their work-life balance. Men working full-time are least likely to make a request – with just 11.9 per cent of these SA men making a request.

Even though there are some differences in the estimates for SA compared to Australian workers in the national 2012 AWALI survey, these contrasts did not reach statistical significance. This may be due to the comparatively small sample size of SA workers who requested flexibility.

Table 10 Requests to change work arrangements by working hours (per cent)

	Men		Women		All	
	SA	Aust	SA	Aust	SA	Aust
Full-time	11.9	14.8	22.1	20.3	15.2	16.7
Part-time	22.0*	27.5	30.8	27.9	28.1	27.8

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size.

### *Requests by occupation*

Rates of request-making did differ significantly by occupation, and this is mainly due to the higher than average rate of requests reported by sales workers (Table 11). Indeed, in both the SA and national samples, sales workers were most likely to make a flexibility request. This most likely reflects the high numbers of women (who are often combining work and care), and students, working in retail. There were no statistically significant differences between the SA and national AWALI 2012 surveys.

Table 11 Requests to change work arrangements by occupation (per cent)

	SA 2012	Aust 2012
Managers	18.8	17.4
Professionals	22.4	20.0
Technicians and trades workers	10.4*	18.8
Community and personal service workers	20.7	25.1
Clerical and administrative workers	19.5	21.2
Sales workers	35.6	28.9
Machinery operators and drivers	**	11.0
Labourers	22.2*	15.4

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size. \*\*Estimate not provided due to inadequate sample size.

### **Reason for making a request**

We turn now to consider the main reasons why SA workers are requesting flexibility. As Figure 24 shows, the most common reason for requesting flexibility is to meet a family or child-care commitment (28.3 per cent). A comparable proportion needed flexibility to meet study commitments, or because of a health problem (15-17 per cent). Finally, around 11 per cent of SA workers requested a change to their work arrangement in order to increase their hours or income.

A similar pattern is evident in the national AWALI 2012 data with one exception. The top five reasons to make a request for SA workers includes spending more time with family, whereas in the national data this reason was not amongst the five most common reasons. Instead, the fifth most common reason to request flexibility in the national data was to reduce job demands. Although sample size restrictions did not enable statistical comparison with the national data, these patterns do suggest that requesting flexibility to spend more time with family is more common in SA than the Australian average in AWALI 2012 national data. Additional data is provided in Appendix Table A5.

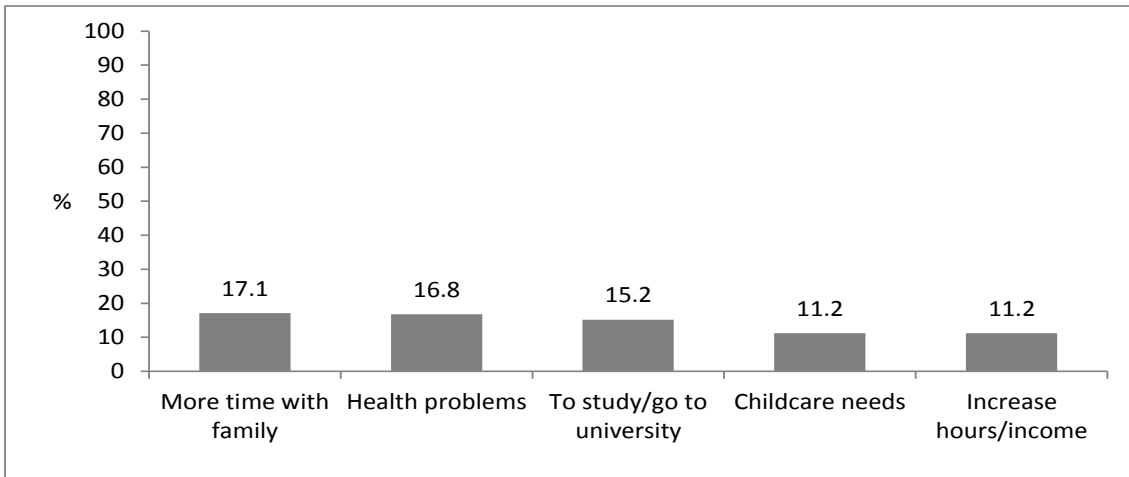


Figure 24 Top five reasons for requesting a change to work arrangements (per cent)

### Outcome of requests

The majority of requests –just under 70 per cent - made by SA workers were fully granted (Figure 25). In addition, a further 17.9 per cent of SA women had their flexibility requests partially granted, with less than 10 per cent having a request declined. There were insufficient SA men in the sample making requests to permit further analyses on request outcomes.

There is some indication that the acceptance rate of flexibility requests is higher in SA than the national average, however these contrasts (men, women, all) did not reach statistical significance which may be due the smaller sample size of SA requesters.

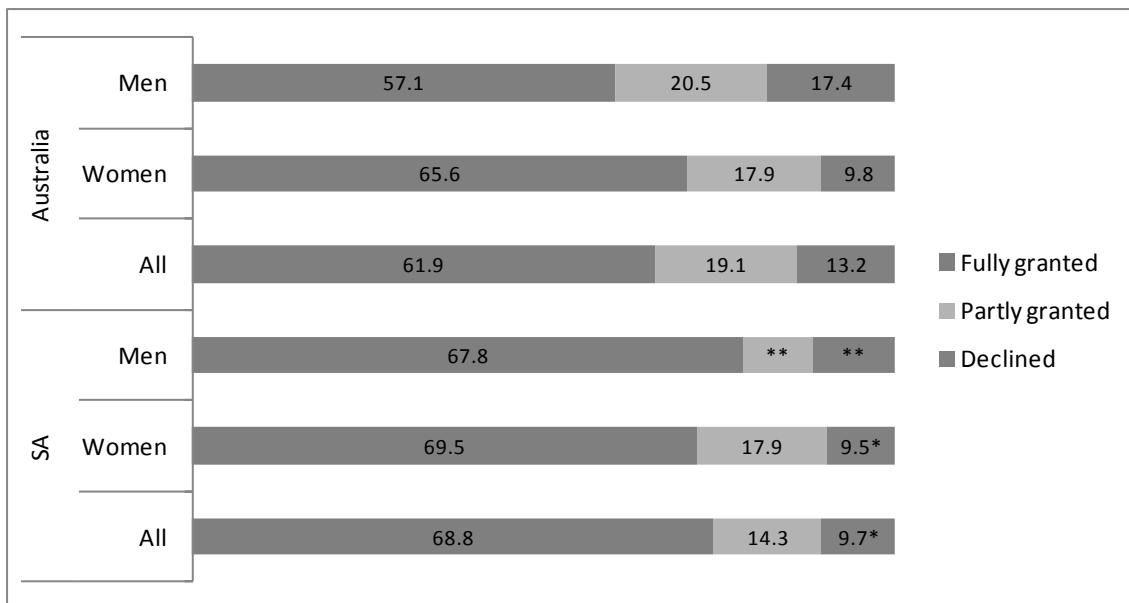


Figure 25 Request outcomes by gender (per cent)

Note. \*Estimate unreliable due to insufficient sample size. \*\*Estimate not provided due to inadequate sample size.

### Request outcomes and work-life interference

There is a clear association between having a flexibility request fully granted and lower work-life interference (Figure 26). These findings mirror the patterns observed in the national AWALI 2012 survey with one exception; the work-life index score for SA workers who had a request partially granted is comparatively high. This result should be interpreted with caution as only a small number (n = 29) are in this category, and this pattern was not observed in the national data. The SA sample was not sufficient to enable a separate analysis for men and women.

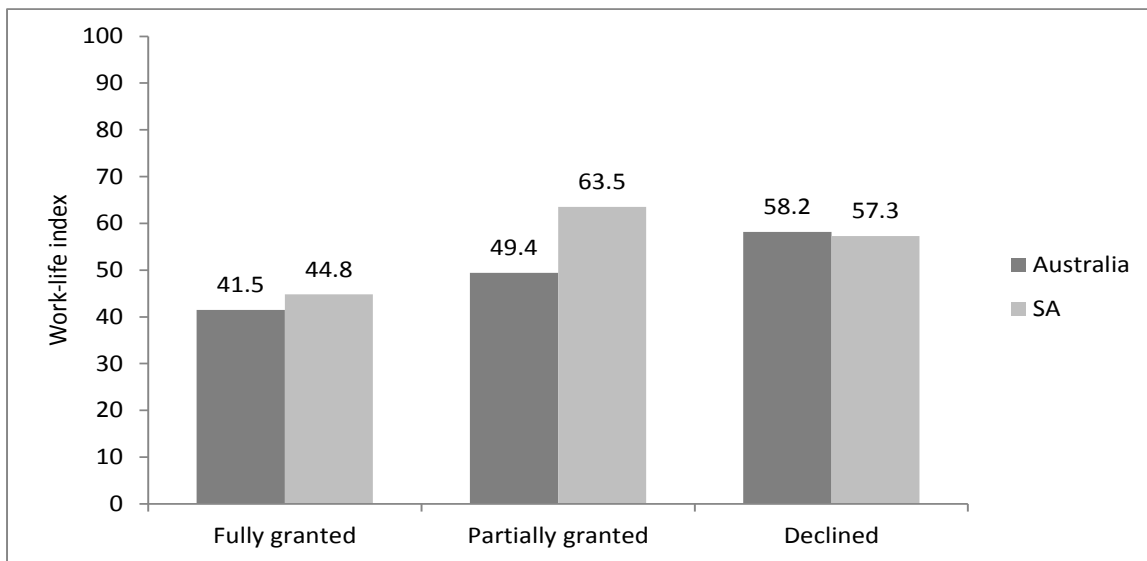


Figure 26 Work-life index scores by request outcome

### Why workers do not make a request

The majority of SA workers, around 80 per cent, did not make a flexibility request in the past 12 months. Here we examine the reasons why workers did not ask for flexibility. AWALI survey respondents were presented with a range of possible reasons for not making a request. As with the national survey, the two most common reasons given were that workers were content with their current work arrangements, or they believed that flexibility was not possible in their job (nature of the work, or believed their boss would not allow it).

Table 12 shows that for the majority of SA workers – 60.9 per cent - who did not request flexibility the reason for this was their contentment with their work arrangements. The second most common reason was a belief that flexibility was not possible or available. A further 10 per cent of SA workers reported that they had not requested flexibility because they could not afford a reduction in income (4.9 per cent) or because they had just started their job (5.1 per cent). Less than five per cent of respondents in the national survey identified these latter two reasons.

Compared to the Australian workers in general, SA workers are less likely to say they had not requested flexibility because they are content with current arrangements.

Table 12 Reasons request not made by gender (per cent)

	SA			Australia		
	Men	Women	All	Men	Women	All
Content with arrangements	<b>62.3</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>60.9</b>	<b>70.1</b>	<b>71.0</b>	<b>70.5</b>
Flexibility not possible <sup>a</sup>	<b>10.4</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>11.8</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>15.2</b>	<b>15.0</b>

Note. <sup>a</sup>'Flexibility not possible' collated from response options 'not convinced employer would allow it', 'job does not allow it' and 'flexibility not possible or available'.

## Overview of key findings

From SA AWALI 2012, South Australian workers request flexible work arrangements, and have their requests accepted, at comparable rates to the national average:

- 1 in 5 SA workers made a request for a flexible work arrangement in the last 12 months;
- The majority – nearly 70 per cent – had this request fully accepted.

Those most likely to make a request are:

- Women with children, especially pre-school aged children;
- Workers in part-time jobs, especially women part-timers;
- Workers in sales occupations.

The most common reasons to make a flexibility request are:

- To meet child-care or family responsibilities and commitments;
- To meet study commitments;
- Because of health reasons.

Of those workers who did not make a request, the majority (around 60 per cent) are content with their current work arrangements. Other reasons cited by a minority of respondents were that flexibility is not possible in their job, they had just started their job or that they could not afford a reduction in income.

Access to flexibility is an important support for work-life balance – there is a clear association between having a flexibility request accepted and lower work-life interference.

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