

Gender Equality at Work 2020

Excerpt: Labour market overview

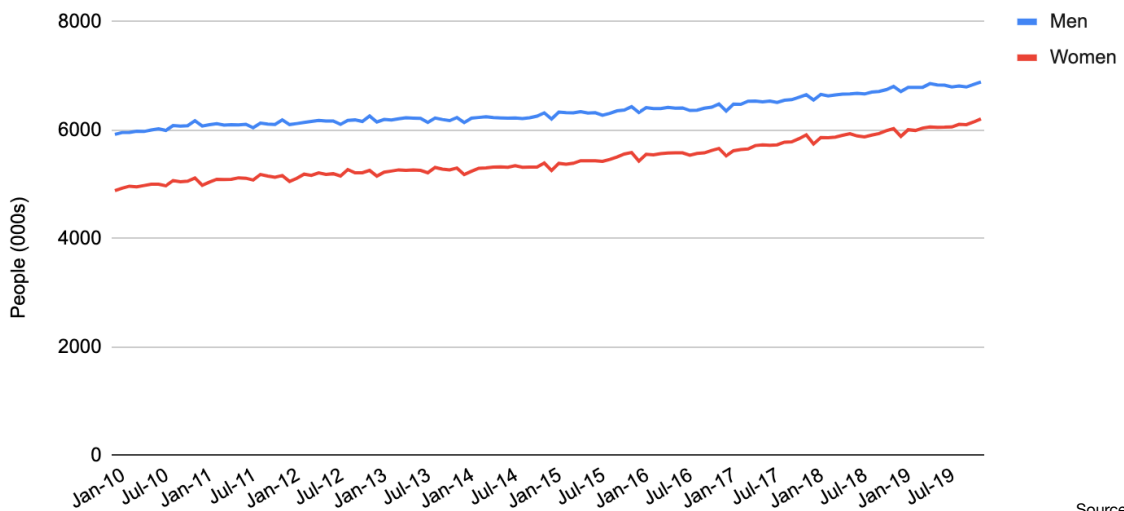
Key outtakes:

1. Growth in women’s employment was almost double that of men’s in 2019 (5.20 per cent compared to 2.56 per cent), confirming a decade-long trend;
2. Women’s full-time employment is growing 10 per cent faster than men’s; and,
3. Men’s part-time employment has grown four per cent faster than women’s.

Across the decade we can see a changing labour market begin to emerge, for both men and women. We are seeing more men work part-time and more women work full-time.

I outline these changes and describe their emergence and impact.

Total employed men and women, January 2010 - December 2019

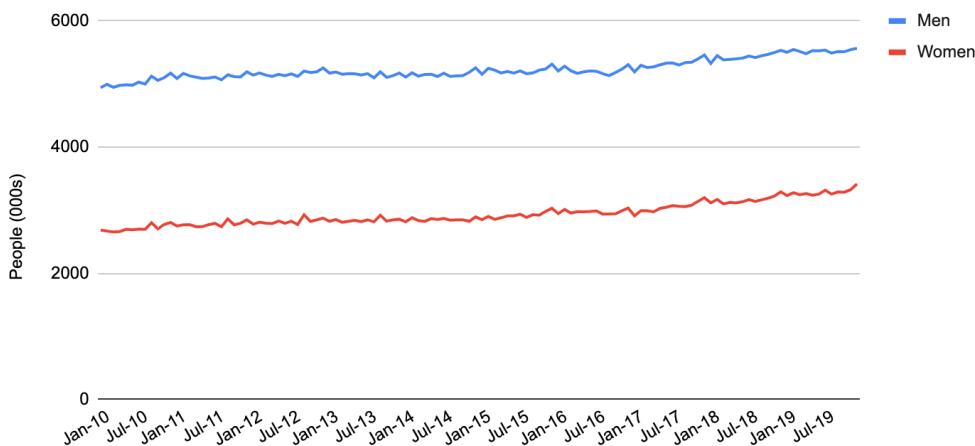


Source: ABS 6202

In 2019, there was an increase of 3.81 per cent of people working, 64.69 per cent of this was female employment which grew 5.20 per cent compared to men’s which grew 2.56 per cent.

Source: ABS 6202

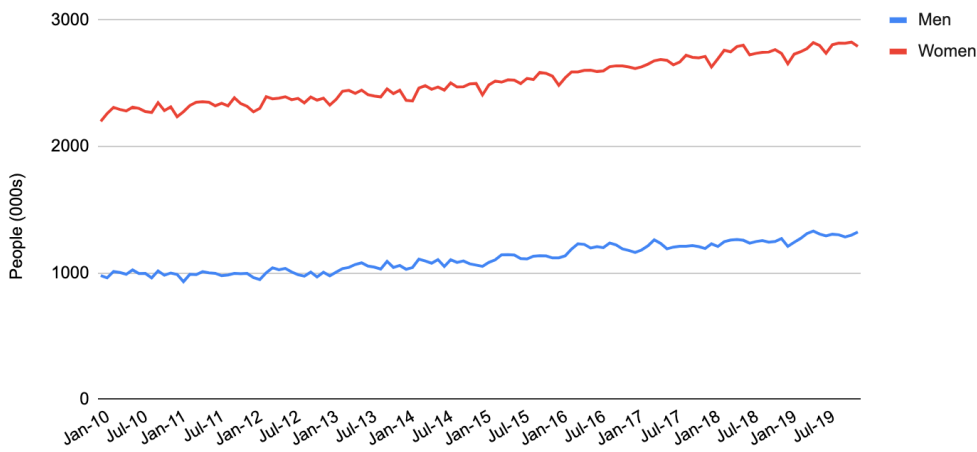
Full-time employed men and women, January 2010 - December 2019



Through the decade, women’s employment grew stronger at 21.33 per cent compared to men’s at 14.03 per cent (323,100 and 176,300 people respectively).

The breakdown between full and part-time work was relatively even (49.60 per cent and 50.40 per cent, respectively); however, due to the fact that full-time employment is adding a similar amount of jobs as

Part-time employed men and women, January 2010 - December 2019



part-time work and part-time work being at a lower total (there were 4,116,800 part-time workers and 8,984,900 full-time workers as at December 2019), the growth in part-time work is notably stronger at 6.11 per cent compared to 2.76 per cent.

A similar, but less strong, trend is seen across the decade with part-time work growing 22.76 per cent compared to 15.08 per

cent for full-time.

Across both the short and longer terms male growth in part-time work was stronger and female growth in full-time work was stronger.

Since 2010 male full-time employment has grown by 11.19 per cent and female by 21.14 per cent; and male part-time work by 25.98 per cent and female by 21.24 per cent.

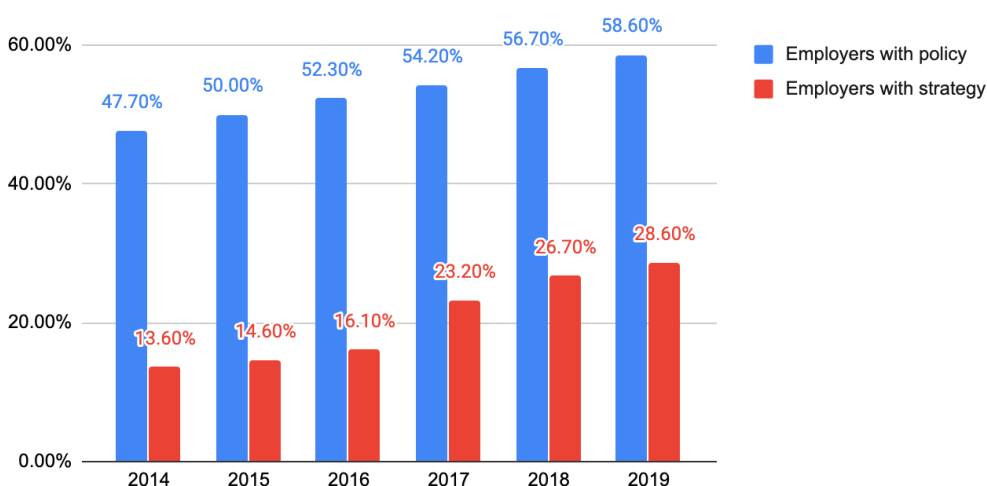
Since 2019 male full-time employment has grown by 1.13 per cent and female by 5.41 per cent; and male part-time work by 8.58 per cent and female by 4.95 per cent.

In line with this, the primary notable figure in unemployed people looking for work is a 15.10 per cent increase in unemployed men looking for part-time work in the past year. Secondly, there is a general slowing of unemployed people looking for full-time work.

This is the first decade where women's full-time employment has outstripped men's, and men's against women's in part-time employment.

These are strong trends in employment signifying both a willingness by individuals and employers to consider non-traditional approaches to work.

Employers with flexible working policies or strategies, 2014 - 2019



Source: WGEA

This suggests three things are occurring:

1. Organisations are increasingly committed to flexible working options;
2. Flexible working is an option for men and women; and,
3. Standard future employment is not assumed full-time.

This is aligned with an increase in rhetoric by employers on flexible working and in action, per Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting. WGEA data shows that between 2014 and 2019 there has been an 11 per cent increase in employers with a flexible working policy and 15 per cent increase of employers with a flexible working strategy.

In short, employers are increasingly organised and prepared for flexible working arrangements. It seems that employers are more prepared to give workers choice about how they work.

This has an impact on full and part-time working arrangements. For full-time work, flexible working arrangements offer a greater autonomy and ownership of how to manage work itself. For part-time work, it allows greater flexibility and adaptability to personal and workplace needs for that labour.

For the most part, these changes have emanated from the global financial crisis. The emergence of these trends starts in 2008 when organisations needed more flexibility in the workforce and changed their staffing processes.

Additionally, the push for more flexible working arrangements, and more part-time work, has been under the banner of work-life-balance and in pursuit of gender equality goals which have been more defined by larger companies.

Part-time work has had a larger percentage increase in both the last year and decade compared to full-time work, which may also have been impacted by the growth in gig-work.

These are strong trends that have now been developing over more than a decade. Part-time and flexible working is being embedded across the economy.

Additionally, with more men taking up part-time work it is allowing more women to work full-time. As this shift isn't happening at an equal rate it is unlikely that women are replacing men or doing men out of a job, but organisations are creating new roles which women are now working in.

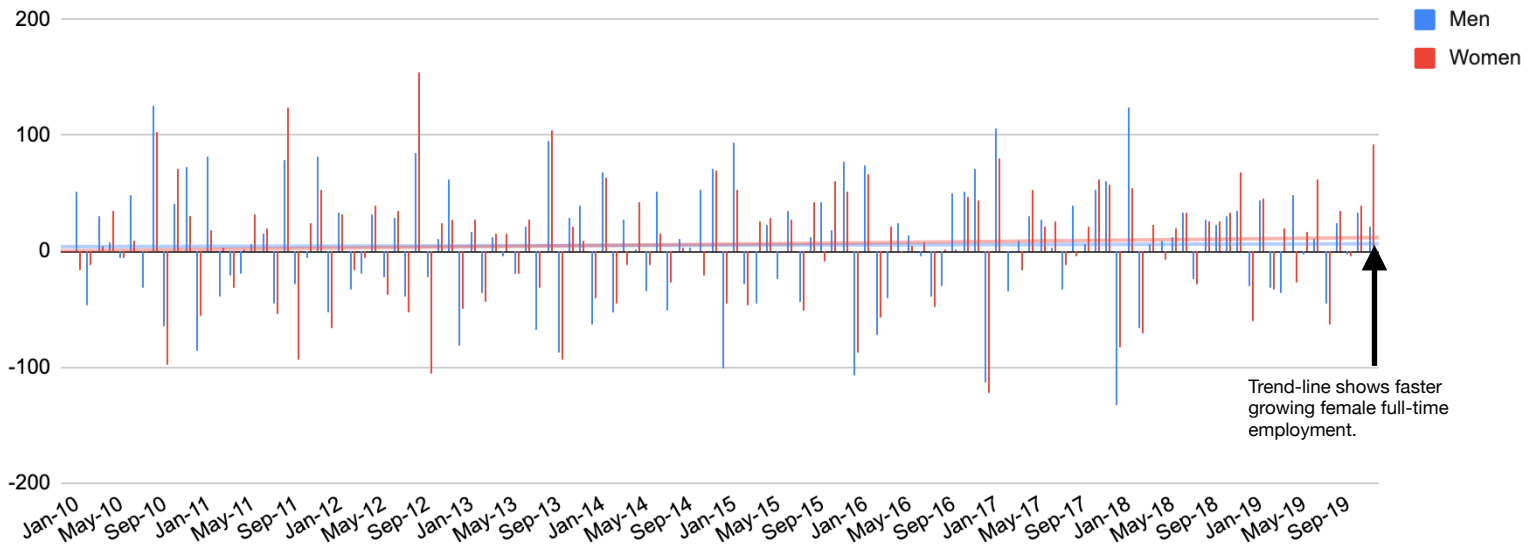
This past decade has more fully developed the road for gender equality in Australian workplaces.

The path is being set for more women to return to work, more men to work part-time and more people to manage work and their lives with greater ease.

Appendix:

1: Full-time employment changes over decade.

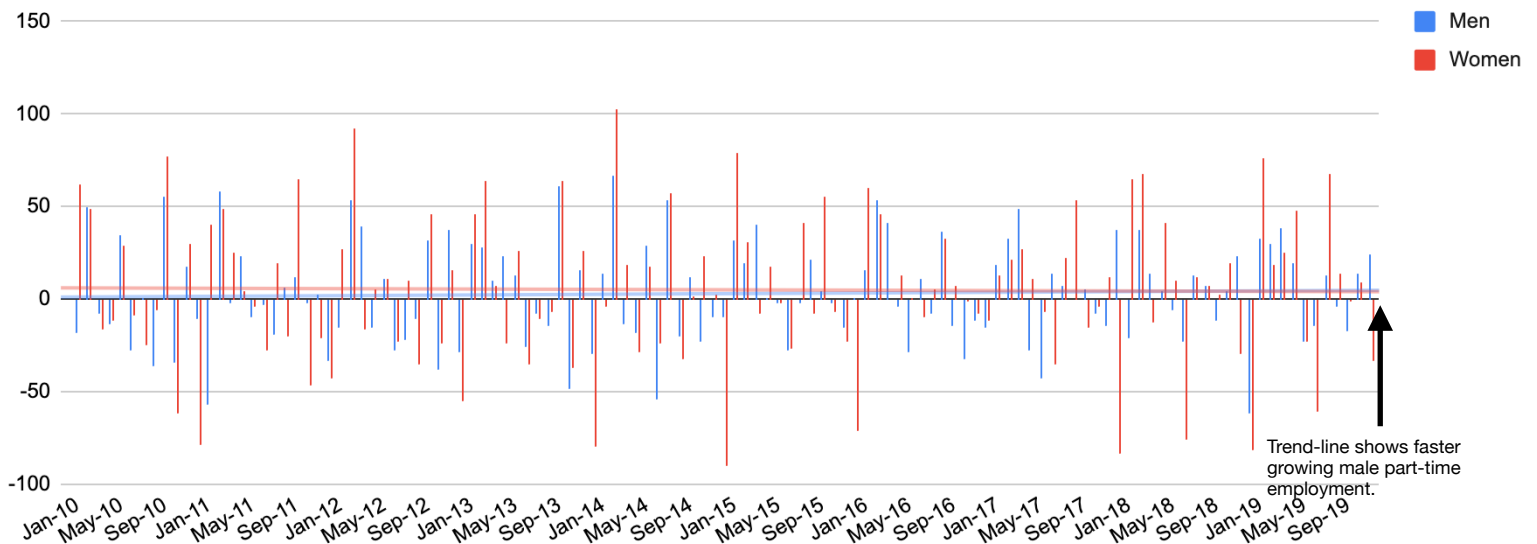
+/- change in full-time employment, January 2010 - December 2019



Source: ABS 6202

2: Part-time employment changes over decade.

+/- change in part-time employment, January 2010 - December 2019



Source: ABS 6202

Disclosure:

This is an excerpt of "Gender Equality at Work 2020", the full document will be released in advance of International Women's Day 2020.

This is part of a periodic analysis of various workplace and economic issues of contemporary national and industry interest. All efforts are made to present the evidence as impartial, independent, fair and not misleading.

The author, Conrad Liveris, is a corporate adviser and economist, focusing on the labour market and workplaces. Considered one of Australia's leading employment and workplace experts, he works closely with decision-makers across sectors on a range of HR, management and economic issues. He is alumni of the US State Department's programs and the UN, and is an Associate Fellow of the Royal Commonwealth Society (London). He completed his Bachelor of Arts at the University of Notre Dame Australia, a Master of Commerce at Curtin University and has received scholarships for management education at the Governance Institute of Australia and the University of California, Los Angeles.