

Pathways for women: the big picture



The big picture on the pathways women take through education, training and work

From a position of entrenched disadvantage as recently as 50 years ago, women have made huge progress. A greater proportion of women participate in the job market today than ever before; female unemployment is lower than at any time in the past 18 years; women's participation and achievement in education has surpassed that of men; and more women than ever before are working in highly skilled jobs.

However, many women are still unable to make genuine choices about their participation in the job market because they are constrained by barriers such as the availability of affordable and flexible childcare. Women in work are still paid less on average than men, and men still dominate senior jobs in many sectors of the economy.

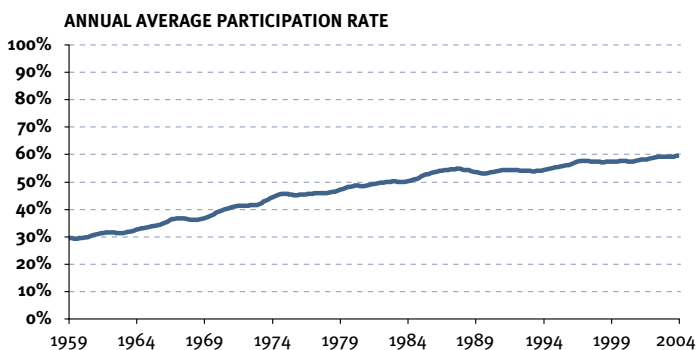
Further work to eliminate these barriers and inequities is justifiable purely on the grounds of social justice – everyone has the right to choose whether or not they want to work, and to pay and employment equity when they are in work. And from an economic perspective, the realities of the modern job market are that removing barriers to job market participation, supporting the participation of women who choose to work, and eliminating pay and employment inequities is more important than ever before.

The job market is changing. Ten years ago, high unemployment made job creation the top priority. Now, strong economic growth has taken employment to record highs and unemployment to record lows. As a result, many businesses are struggling to find the staff they need to keep expanding. It's an ideal time to ensure that the job opportunities on offer are available to as many people as possible, and it's crucial that we make better use of the people we have by helping them develop their skills and ensuring they have the opportunity to work to their full potential – in other words, supporting people to work and working smarter to create greater prosperity.

Women's participation in the job market has risen

Of all the different ways in which the New Zealand job market has evolved over the past 50 years, the rise in the participation of women has been one of the most important. In 1959, approximately 29% of working-age women participated in the job market. By 2004, women's participation rate had risen to 60%.

Women's job market participation, 1959 to 2004



Source: 1959-86 data; New Zealand Institute of Economic Research, 1986-2004 data; Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

WHAT IS JOB MARKET PARTICIPATION?

People who participate in the job market either by working (the *employed*) or by being available for work and actively seeking it (the *unemployed*) together make up the *labour force*.

The *labour force participation rate*, or the *participation rate* for short, is the number of people in the labour force divided by the number of people in the working-age population (all people aged 15 years and above). The participation rate is usually expressed as a percentage.

Explaining the rise in women's job market participation

This section summarises some of the changes in society, the economy, the job market and the education system that are closely related to the rise in women's job market participation.

First off, it is worth emphasising that the relationships between the economy, society, the job market and the education system are complex. Indeed, there is debate over what has caused women's participation to rise, and what changes have been caused by the rise. For example, did falling birth rates give women more opportunity to enter the job market, or has the rise in women's job market participation caused birth rates to fall? Has part-time work grown in response to the needs of working mothers, or have working mothers simply taken advantage of employers offering more flexible work practices? A great deal of research has been devoted to finding the answers to these questions, but a consensus of opinion does not yet exist. Perhaps the most sensible conclusion that can be drawn at the moment is that regardless of what prompted the rise in women's participation, once it gathered momentum it began to induce changes in society, the economy, the job market and the education system that have furthered its progress.

THE ECONOMY

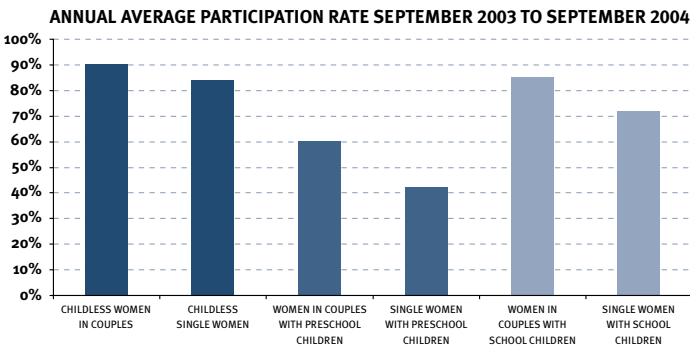
Prior to the 1960s, the economy largely comprised agricultural and manufacturing jobs. This kind of work was mainly done by men because it was generally thought that women were unable to fulfil the jobs' physical requirements. Things began to change with the long post-war economic boom of the 1950s, 1960s and early 1970s, which created many new jobs in the expanding services sector. The jobs were less physical, and with most men already in employment, employers began to look to women to fill their vacant positions. At the same time, new machinery was being introduced into manufacturing. Goods were produced on a much larger scale and, as the work in factories became less physical, many more women found work running the machines.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, economic growth slowed but women's participation in the job market continued to increase. Falling birth rates, changing social attitudes, the increased availability of early childhood education, childcare services and part-time work, and improvements in women's educational achievement are all closely related to increases in women's job market participation up to the present day. During the past 10 years, strong job growth has resumed, adding further stimulus to what is now a well-established trend in women's employment.

BIRTH RATES AND FAMILY STRUCTURE

The past 50 years have seen profound changes in birth rates and family structures, both of which are closely related to women's job market participation. The chart below demonstrates the relationship between having children and women's job market participation. Women aged 25 to 44 are split into groups according to whether or not they have children, and whether or not they are in a couple. For each group, the chart shows the proportion of women participating in the job market. It shows that in the 25 to 44 age group, a greater proportion of childless women and women with school-aged children participate in the job market than mothers of preschool-aged children.

Job market participation of women aged 25 to 44 in different family structures, 2004



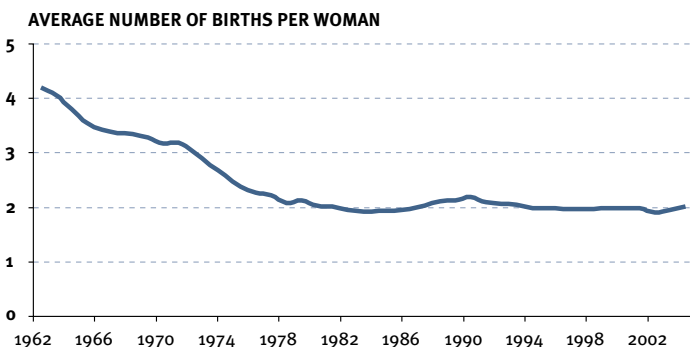
Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

Access to the data used in this study was provided by Statistics New Zealand under conditions designed to give effect to the security and confidentiality provisions of the Statistics Act 1975. The results presented in this study are the work of the author, not Statistics New Zealand.

Only women aged 25 to 44 are included in this chart. Younger and older women are less likely to have dependent children and are less likely to participate in the job market. Including them would distort the results.

It is not surprising, then, that a decline in birth rates in the 1960s and 1970s (shown in the chart below) has accompanied the rise in women's job market participation.

Falling birth rates, 1962 to 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand

However, there's a little more to it than just falling birth rates. Women are also having their first child later in life, a trend that is partly related

to people getting married later, on average. The age span over which children are born has also narrowed. As a result, the most significant declines in birth rates have occurred among women in their 20s. In the 1960s and 1970s, birth rates across the main childbearing ages of 20 to 35 years declined from the post-war peak often referred to as the "baby boom". Since then, birth rates of women in their early 20s have continued to fall, but birth rates of women in their early 30s have begun to rise again.

The direct impact of falling birth rates and the secondary effect of more women establishing careers before they have children are both related to the increasing job market participation of women in their 20s. With established careers, women are also generally more inclined and more able to return to work when their children are older.

Other aspects of family structure are also important in determining women's job market participation. The adjacent chart shows that a smaller proportion of sole mothers participate in the job market compared with childless women or mothers who are in couples. Most notably, among women aged 25-44, 60% of mothers in couples with preschool-aged children participated in the job market in 2004, compared with just 42% of single mothers with preschool-aged children. The traditional nuclear family (mother, father and children) is still the dominant family type, but it is less common than it used to be. More people are living alone or as sole parents, partly because of increases in divorce rates and relationship break-ups.

It is sometimes argued that the rising number of single mothers is related to the overall increase in women's participation, but the nature of this relationship is unclear. The increase in sole parenting may have undermined the growth in women's participation because many women find their work options limited when they have sole responsibility for a child. But the greater likelihood of parental break-ups may have acted as a spur to women's participation by encouraging women to take charge of their own financial independence. It is also possible that greater financial independence and the responsibilities of job market participation may have played a part in the rising number of divorces and break-ups.

SOCIAL ATTITUDES

In the early part of the century, women were often expected to stop work when they got married, and certainly when they had children. But social attitudes have changed. Increasing numbers of women are establishing careers in their 20s, having children in their early 30s, and returning to work soon afterwards. During the past two decades (that's as far back as comparable data goes), the participation rate of women aged between 25 and 44 with preschool-aged children has risen from 47% in 1986 to 57% in 2004.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES

Early childhood education (ECE) and care services have grown and adapted to meet the needs of working mothers. The 1960s saw the emergence of many informal playgroups. Since then, the range of services has broadened to include kindergartens, te kōhanga reo, education and care services, and home-based services. The number of children participating in some form of early childhood education increased from approximately 64,000 in 1983 to 185,000 in 2004.

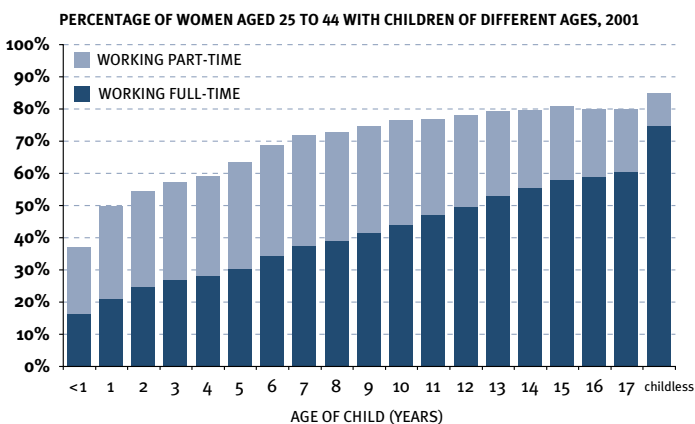
FLEXIBLE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Employers have become more flexible about the working arrangements they offer to employees. The most prevalent example of this is part-time work, defined as jobs requiring less than 30 hours' work per week. Part-time work has been increasing since the 1960s. More recently, working mothers have reported using home working and flexible hours to balance work and family responsibilities.

The number of women working full-time has always outnumbered those working part-time, and part-time work has recently been taken up by people from a much wider range of backgrounds. But generally speaking, part-time work has allowed many mothers of young children to either retain or regain some measure of job market participation. The chart below demonstrates this. Women aged 25 to 44 are split into groups according to whether or not they have children, and by the age of their youngest child. In each group, the percentage working part-time and full-time is shown.

The chart shows that in 2001 (the most recent data available), among mothers aged 25 to 44, those with older children are increasingly likely to work full-time. But in children's earliest years, part-time work is more important in helping mothers stay or get back into the job market. Among mothers aged 25 to 44 with a child younger than a year old, 16% work full-time and 21% work part-time. Among mothers in the same age group whose child is a year old the gap is even wider; the proportion of full-timers is 21% and part-timers 29%. Only among those whose youngest child is aged seven or older is the proportion working full-time greater than the proportion working part-time.

Working hours of women aged 25 to 44 with children of different ages, 2001



Source: Statistics New Zealand
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Only women aged 25 to 44 are included in this chart. Younger and older women are less likely to have dependent children and are less likely to work part-time. Including them would distort the results.

The New Zealand Childcare Survey 1998 provides information about other forms of flexible work arrangements used by mothers. Although the survey was carried out some years ago, it is still the most comprehensive research to date of parents' job market participation and their use of early childhood education and care services. Mothers were asked about the work arrangements they used to manage their childcare responsibilities. The most common responses were working in the evenings, flexible working hours, working at home and working during weekends.

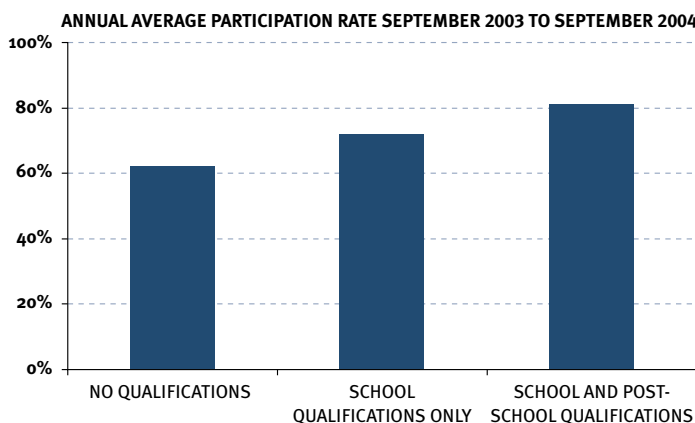
EDUCATION

In the 1970s, women generally left school earlier than men, and did so with fewer qualifications. Fewer women enrolled in further education as well. Throughout the late 1970s and early 1980s, education increasingly became recognised as a key means of addressing the inequalities women faced in the job market and in society generally. The Government developed a policy for equal education opportunities, whose initial goal was to achieve parity in education retention rates between boys and girls. Today, girls tend to remain in school longer than boys and achieve higher school-leaving qualifications; women's participation and achievement in tertiary education has surpassed that of men; and participation in tertiary education is higher among older women than among older men. As a result, between 1986 and 2004 the number of women with school and post-school qualifications increased by 118% compared with 100% for men. And the number of women with no qualification fell by 26%, compared with a 22% fall for men.

That better education leads to more successful employment and careers applies to all groups of people, and women are no exception. It follows that people who have invested in their education are likely to want to use it to develop a career, and the more successful a person is in the job market, the more likely they are to continue participating in the job market.

The chart below underlines the relationship between women's participation and their education. It splits women aged 25 to 59 into groups according to their highest qualification and measures their participation in the job market. It shows a participation rate of 81% for women with school and post-school qualifications, compared with 72% for women with school qualifications only, and 62% for women with no qualifications. The close relationship between education and women's participation is further underlined by the fact that between 1986 and 2004, the number of women aged 25 to 59 with school and post-school qualifications participating in the job market almost tripled, while the number with no qualifications fell by more than a third.

Education and the job market participation of women aged 25-59, 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey
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Only women aged 25 to 59 are included in this chart. A large proportion of younger women are still studying and only a small proportion of older women participate in the job market. Including these two groups would not give a true reflection of how education relates to women's job market participation.

The remainder of this section presents more detail about women's growing participation and achievement in education, and how it compares with that of men.

SCHOOL

- Girls stay in school longer than boys do. Of students aged 14 in 2001, 56% of boys and 65% of girls were still in school three years later at age 17.
- In 2003, a greater proportion of girls (32%) than boys (25%) achieved a university entrance qualification before they left school.
- In 2003, fewer girls (13%) than boys (17%) left school with no qualifications.

TERTIARY EDUCATION

- Women gain higher tertiary qualifications than men. Among students aged 16 to 24 who completed a qualification in 2003, 41% of women completed a degree or higher qualification compared with 36% of men.
- Women gain higher tertiary qualifications than men. Among female students aged 16 to 24 who completed a qualification in 2003, 41% completed a degree or higher qualification. Among male students, it was 36%.
- Among mature students, an equal proportion (24%) of men and women completed a degree or higher qualification, but a greater proportion of women than men completed diplomas.

Perhaps the most striking difference between men's and women's experiences in tertiary education lies in the subjects they choose to study, the implications of which can be seen in the type of jobs women do. See the section entitled *Women's seniority in work has risen* for more details. The table below shows that women are much more likely than men to study health- and education-related subjects, while men are much more likely than women to study engineering, agriculture, architecture and building.

Qualification completions at tertiary education providers, 2003

SUBJECTS IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOSTLY MEN	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	% OF COMPLETIONS	
		MEN	WOMEN
ENGINEERING AND RELATED TECHNOLOGIES, WHICH INCLUDES:	40,631	87%	13%
– Automotive Engineering and Technology	8,569	92%	8%
– Mechanical/Industrial Engineering and Technology	6,621	97%	3%
– Electrical/Electronic Engineering and Technology	6,167	96%	4%
ARCHITECTURE AND BUILDING	10,962	73%	27%
AGRICULTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES, WHICH INCLUDES:	19,888	72%	28%
– Agriculture	9,886	74%	26%
– Horticulture and Viticulture	4,782	67%	33%
SUBJECTS IN WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOSTLY WOMEN			
HEALTH, WHICH INCLUDES:	54,972	34%	66%
– Nursing	10,549	8%	92%
EDUCATION, WHICH INCLUDES:	34,523	20%	80%
– Teacher Education	32,879	21%	79%
TOURISM	6,984	24%	76%
OFFICE STUDIES	7,623	20%	80%
HUMAN WELFARE STUDIES AND SERVICES	10,934	17%	83%
LAW	10,512	33%	67%
VISUAL ARTS AND CRAFTS	5,691	26%	74%
FOOD, HOSPITALITY AND PERSONAL SERVICES, WHICH INCLUDES:	13,149	27%	73%
– Personal Services	5,477	7%	93%
EMPLOYMENT SKILLS PROGRAMMES	41,420	25%	75%

Source: Ministry of Education

INDUSTRY TRAINING

The number of industry trainees has risen steeply in the past four years, and although there are three times as many male industry trainees as there are females, women have been catching up. Between December 2000 and December 2004, the number of female industry trainees increased by 97%, compared with a 54% increase in male industry trainees.

Female industry trainees are found in every industry where training takes place. But as would be expected, the highest numbers are found in industries where high numbers of women are employed; 18% of all female industry trainees work in community support services and a further 14% work in hospitality.

Female modern apprentices are spread across a range of industries, with the largest numbers found in industries as varied as the public sector, horticulture, hospitality, agriculture, baking, retail and tourism. However, men currently outnumber women by more than 10 to one in modern apprentice enrolments. The Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) has worked with Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) to improve the participation of women (and other under-represented groups) in modern apprenticeships. Initiatives have included publicity designed to attract women to apprenticeships and the introduction of modern apprenticeships into industries that are likely to appeal to women.

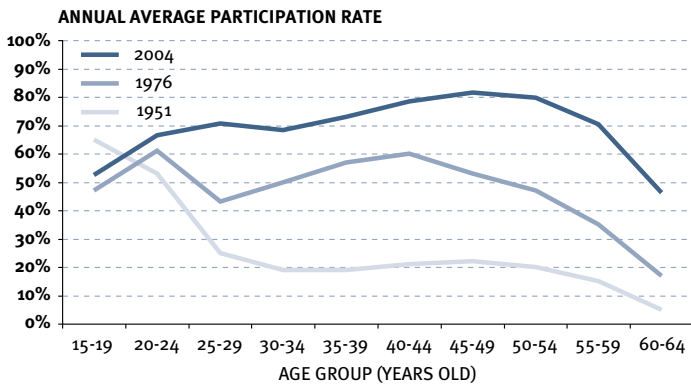
In *Industry Training in Action* on page 4, Natasha Wright talks about her experiences as an industry trainee in the electricity supply industry.

Bringing it all together

All these changes have affected different groups of women in different ways – most notably, women in different age groups. Explaining these effects helps to understand the changes a little better. The chart at the top of the next page compares the job market participation of women in 1951, 1976 and 2004 across a range of age groups. The numbers for 1951 exclude women working fewer than 20 hours per week, so women's participation was probably higher than is shown in the chart. However, it is still useful to compare the shape of the three curves.

- Women aged 15 to 19 are unique because their job market participation has fallen since 1951. This is the result of more women remaining in education past the age of 15.
- Falling birth rates have contributed to steadily rising job market participation in the 20 to 34 age group.
- Notice how in the 1970s women's participation fell in the 25 to 29 age group to give the 1976 curve a distinctive "m" shape.
- With women having children later in life and more women returning to work sooner after having children, the 2004 curve shows a less pronounced dip in participation. Also, the dip now occurs in the 30 to 34 age group.
- Women in their 40s and 50s have shown the greatest rises in job market participation. This is the result of falling birth rates, combined with the many factors that have encouraged more women to return to work after they have children.

Women's job market participation, 1951, 1976 and 2004

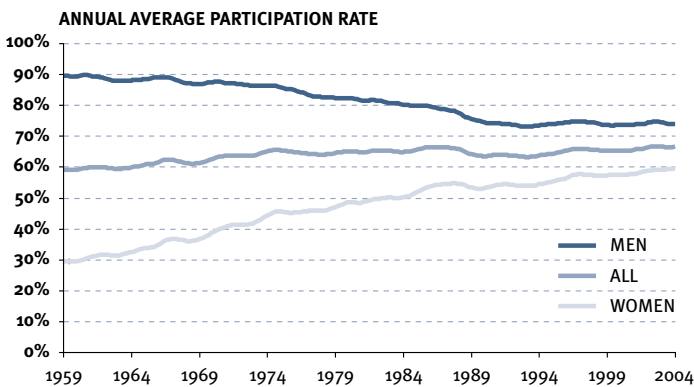


Source: Statistics New Zealand. The 1951 data is taken from a book entitled *Women's Labour Force Participation in New Zealand: The Past 100 Years*, by Lisa Davies, 1993

The gap in men's and women's participation is closing

At the same time as women's participation in the job market has risen, men's participation has gradually declined. The chart below shows how the gap between the rates of men's and women's job market participation has closed. In 1959 approximately 29% of working-age women participated in the job market, compared with approximately 89% of men. By 2004 women's participation had risen to 60% and men's had fallen to 75%.

Men's and women's job market participation, 1959 to 2004

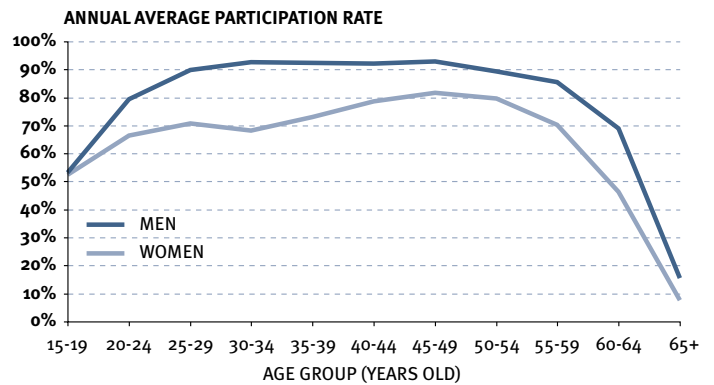


Source: 1959-86 data, New Zealand Institute of Economic Research; 1986-2004 data, Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

A key difference between men and women in their job market participation is that women's participation falls when they have children, while men's doesn't. Because the majority of women have children when they are between the ages of 20 and 35, the effect of having children on men's and women's job market participation can be explored by comparing participation rates for men and women at different ages (see the chart at the top of the next column).

There are patterns of participation that are common to men and women. Younger people's participation is commonly lower because many remain in school or progress to further education and remain there in their early 20s. Older people's job market participation is low because many have retired. But more importantly, the chart shows that between these younger and older age groups, men's participation remains consistently high. In contrast, during the main childbearing years from age 20 to 35, women's participation is much lower than men's, particularly in the 30 to 34 years age group, when having children is most common. In post-childbearing age groups, women's job market participation recovers, but never fully matches that of men's.

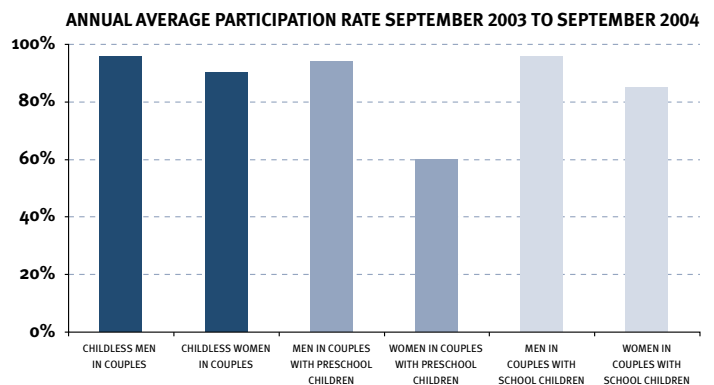
Men's and women's job market participation in different age groups, 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

To underline the point about childcare responsibilities falling mostly on mothers, the chart below shows the gap between the job market participation rates of men and women aged 25 to 44 who live together in couples, according to whether or not they have children, and the age of those children. More than 90% of fathers aged 25 to 44 who have preschool-aged children participate in the job market, compared with just 60% of mothers. The participation gap is much narrower in childless couples and couples with school-aged children. Therefore, despite the fact that many women are establishing a career before they have children and are going back to work sooner following childbirth, the gap between the job market participation of men and women with young children remains wide. Furthermore, sole parents, most of whom are women, have even lower job market participation than mothers who live with a partner.

Job market participation of men and women aged 25 to 44 in different family structures, 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey
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Completing the picture — unpaid work

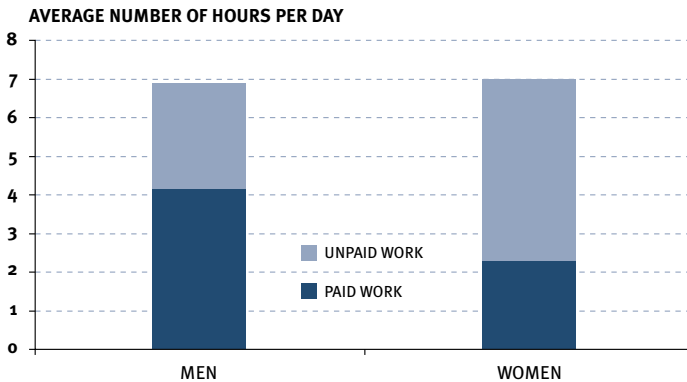
Although women's participation in the job market is lower than men's, it's important to emphasise that women do as much work as men; it's just that more of women's work is unpaid.

Much of this unpaid work takes place in the household. In recent decades, many new technologies and products such as automatic washing machines, microwaves, improved hygiene products, internet shopping and processed foods, as well as the growth of occupations such as household cleaners and childcare workers, have reduced the time household members, particularly women, spend on unpaid household tasks. But as women's unpaid work commitments have shrunk, their involvement in paid work has grown.

The New Zealand National Time Use Survey, conducted in 1998–99, provided valuable information about how much time men and women spend on paid and unpaid work. Unpaid work is defined as the production of goods and services which is not rewarded with money, but which nonetheless has economic as well as social value.

The survey found that both men and women work an average of seven hours per day. Men averaged four hours' paid work and three hours' unpaid work, while women averaged approximately two hours' paid work and five hours' unpaid work. Mothers of preschool-aged children spent more time than any other group on unpaid work, averaging more than seven hours per day. These figures are averages across all days of the week, but the pattern applies only to weekdays. At weekends, men and women spend less time doing any kind of work, and the balance of paid and unpaid work is much more even.

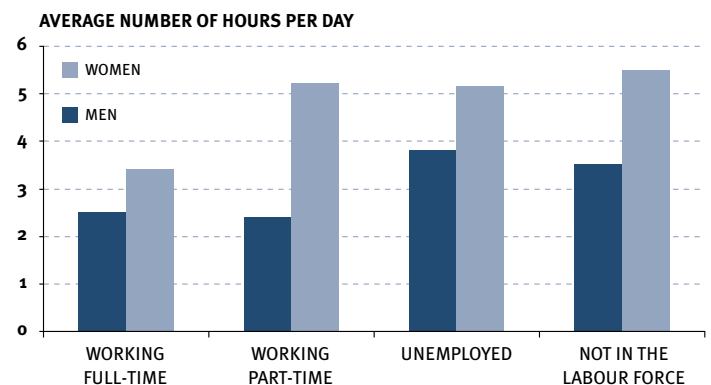
Time spent by men and women on paid and unpaid work, 1998-99



Source: Statistics New Zealand, New Zealand National Time Use Survey 1998-99

Time spent on unpaid work is only partially related to job market participation. The chart at the top of the next column shows that women spend more time than men on unpaid work, regardless of whether or not they are in paid employment. Women who do not participate in the job market (referred to as “not in the labour force”) spend an average of five hours per day on unpaid work, as do women who are employed part-time and women who are unemployed. Women who are employed full-time also have significant unpaid work responsibilities.

Time spent by men and women on unpaid work according to job market participation, 1998-99



Source: Statistics New Zealand, New Zealand National Time Use Survey 1998-99

Looking forward

Women's job market participation is expected to continue rising. Younger women are leaving the education system better qualified than their predecessors, have access to a greater range of job opportunities than ever before, and are faced with fewer barriers to entering employment. As these women age, participation by their younger cohorts will be higher still. Positive action is also being taken to extend the range and flexibility of options for participating in the job market, to eliminate any barriers that might constrain women from making genuine choices about their job market participation, and to support women who choose to participate in the job market. See the section entitled *Government priorities* for more details.

However, there are limits to how much participation can continue rising. Mothers will still need to make important choices about the benefits of paid work over childcare responsibilities. There are many factors that influence whether participation in the job market will result in benefits for the family, and individual families are best placed to make these decisions. In the long term, progress towards equality in men's and women's job market participation will depend on more men taking more responsibility for raising children.

Women's seniority in work has risen

Having looked at the extent of women's participation in the job market and the amount of work they do, it is time to look more closely at the type of work women do. Here, you'll find information about how female employment tends to be concentrated in a relatively small number of jobs, how increasing numbers of women have been working in highly skilled jobs, and how employment inequities between men and women remain.

MEN AND WOMEN DO DIFFERENT TYPES OF WORK

The types of paid work women do have remained largely the same since their job market participation began to increase in the 1960s. Roughly three-quarters of employed women currently work in service industries, mainly:

- health and community services, including hospitals, accommodation for the aged and other health services such as dentists
- education, including early childhood education and childcare services, primary schools, secondary schools and tertiary education institutions
- the retail trade, including supermarkets, department stores, retail clothing shops and petrol stations
- property and business services, including business and management consultancy, legal services and accountancy
- hospitality, including accommodation, cafes and restaurants.

In some of these industries, women make up the majority of people in employment. Approximately 82% of people employed in health and community services are women, as are approximately 72% of the people employed in the education sector.

A significant number of women also work in manufacturing. But relatively few currently work in construction, the wholesale trade, agriculture, forestry, mining, transport, storage and communication. Construction is the clearest example of a male-dominated industry. Approximately 89% of the construction workforce is male.

The earlier section entitled *Education* looked at the subject choices of women in tertiary education. It showed that students studying subjects such as health and education are mainly female, while trades- and engineering-related students are mainly male. Although tertiary education can lead to a variety of career possibilities, subject choice is an important determinant of future job opportunities, particularly in specialised courses such as health, education and engineering. Therefore, current tertiary education student numbers suggest that, in many ways, subject choices reinforce the established pattern of men's and women's employment.

The following table highlights the concentration of women's employment in service-related occupations. It shows the top 10 occupations for men and women, based on the number of people in employment. (Employment numbers are from the 2001 Census because this is the most recent data available.) Employment of retail sales assistants is very high overall, so it's no surprise that it is the number one occupation for men and women. Occupations such as secretary, registered nurse, primary school teacher and caregiver, and clerical-related jobs are all female dominated, while jobs such as heavy truck or tanker driver, builder and carpenter are almost entirely staffed by men.

The jobs men and women most commonly do, 2001

MEN	NUMBER EMPLOYED	WOMEN	NUMBER EMPLOYED
SALES ASSISTANT	32,409	SALES ASSISTANT	53,121
GENERAL MANAGER	31,041	GENERAL CLERK	45,762
HEAVY TRUCK OR TANKER DRIVER	22,044	SECRETARY	25,677
CROP AND LIVESTOCK FARMER, WORKER	17,742	REGISTERED NURSE	23,781
BUILDER (INCLUDING CONTRACTOR)	17,580	PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER	23,109
DAIRY FARMER OR DAIRY FARM WORKER	17,262	CLEANER	22,464
GENERAL LABOURER	16,782	CAREGIVER	20,949
RETAIL MANAGER	15,594	INFORMATION CLERK OR OTHER RECEPTIONIST	20,490
CARPENTER AND/OR JOINER	13,215	ACCOUNTS CLERK	14,808
ADMINISTRATION MANAGER	12,591	RETAIL MANAGER	13,527

Source: Statistics New Zealand, 2001 Census of Population and Dwellings

This segregation of jobs suggests that both men and women face constraints in the opportunities available to them in the job market. It also implies an inequality between men and women in the number of job opportunities available, because male-dominated industries make up a larger share of total employment. In addition, differences in the wage rates of male- and female-dominated jobs have contributed to the inequity between men's and women's pay. The later section on wage inequity explains this in more detail.

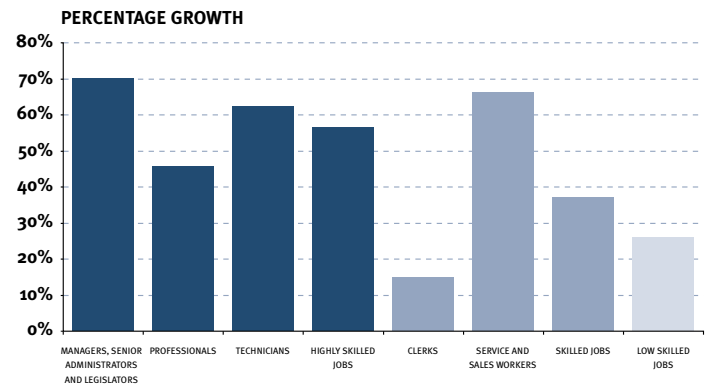
WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT IS BECOMING MORE HIGHLY SKILLED

With improvements in educational attainment and greater, longer-lasting participation in the job market, women have been achieving greater seniority in their careers. However, inequalities with men remain.

One way of examining seniority is to classify occupations according to skill level and to measure trends in employment at different skill levels. Broadly speaking, the tasks performed by professionals, technicians and managers require higher-level skills than those needed by retail sales workers and clerks, which, in turn, are more highly skilled than the lowest-skilled "elementary" occupations.

Over the past 13 years, women's employment growth has been greatest in higher-skilled occupations. Between 1991 and 2004, the number of women employed in professional, technical and managerial occupations grew by 56%, compared with 37% growth in sales and clerical occupations, and 26% in the lowest-skilled elementary occupations.

Women's employment growth at different skill levels, 1991 to 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Household Labour Force Survey

Women are also gradually achieving greater equality with men in terms of their share of higher-skilled jobs:

- In 1991, 44% of technicians were women; by 2004 the proportion of women had grown to 52%.
- Strong job growth has increased the proportion of managers who are women from 30% in 1991 to 36% in 2004. However, this very senior occupational group remains dominated by men.
- At first glance, equal opportunity seems to have been achieved in professional occupations some time ago. In 1991, just over half of all professionals were women, the same proportion as today. However, closer inspection reveals that women's professional employment is concentrated in primary and secondary school teaching and nursing, whereas men's employment is spread much more evenly across a range of highly skilled professional jobs.

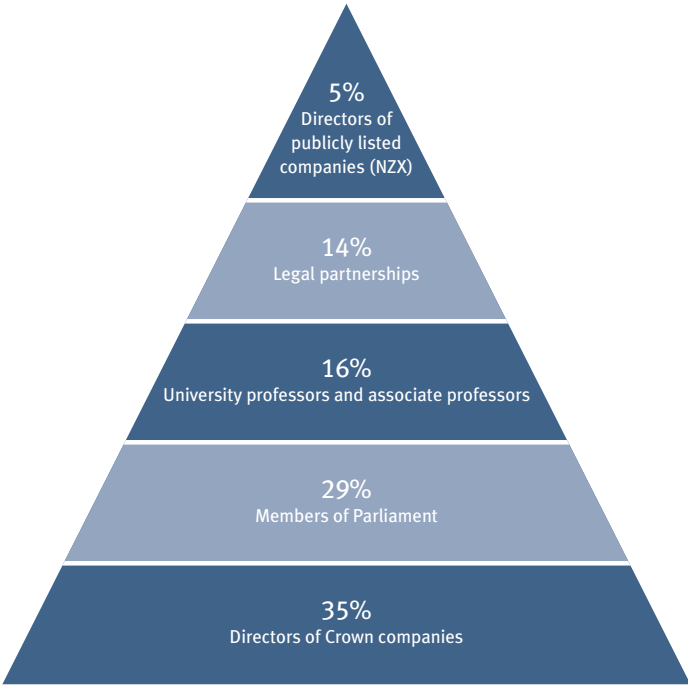
WOMEN IN SENIOR LEADERSHIP AND DECISION-MAKING ROLES

Further details about inequalities within the most senior and highly skilled occupations were revealed in the 2004 New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life. Conducted by the Human Rights Commission and the New Zealand Centre for Women and Leadership at Massey University, it was the first survey to count women in leadership and decision-making positions in private and Crown companies, as well as on the top rungs of the legal, political and academic professions.

The results indicate that women's presence in these areas is lower than expected, given their level of participation in the job market, not to mention their share of the population as a whole. At best, approximately one-third of seats in Parliament (29%) and one-third of board directorships in New Zealand Crown companies (35%) are held by women. Crown

companies have been the subject of successive governments' commitment to improve gender representation. The private sector has been under no such obligation, and this is reflected in the fact that women hold only 5% of board directorships in top companies in the private corporate sector (in other words, companies listed on the New Zealand Stock Exchange).

Representation of women in governance and leadership roles, 2004

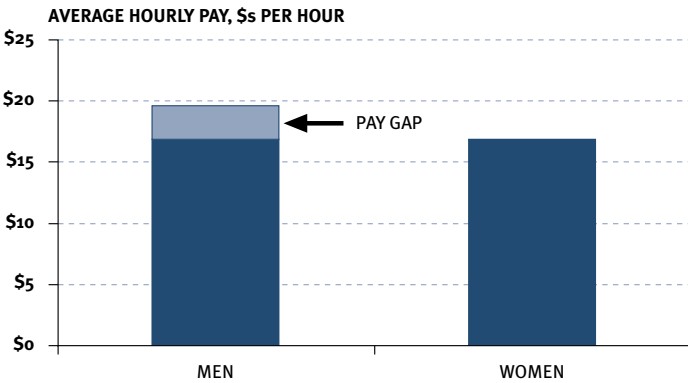


Source: Human Rights Commission and Massey University, New Zealand Centre for Women and Leadership, New Zealand Census of Women's Participation in Governance and Professional Life 2004

The pay gap is closing

The process of attaining pay equity between men and women began with the passing of the Equal Pay Act in 1972. The Act abolished separate pay rates for men and women doing the same job. In the years following, the pay gap quickly narrowed. Improvements were slower in the 1980s, especially during the wage and price freeze of the early 1980s. In the past 20 years, improvements have been gradual. In 1984, women's average hourly earnings were 21% lower than men's. By 2004, they were only 14% lower.

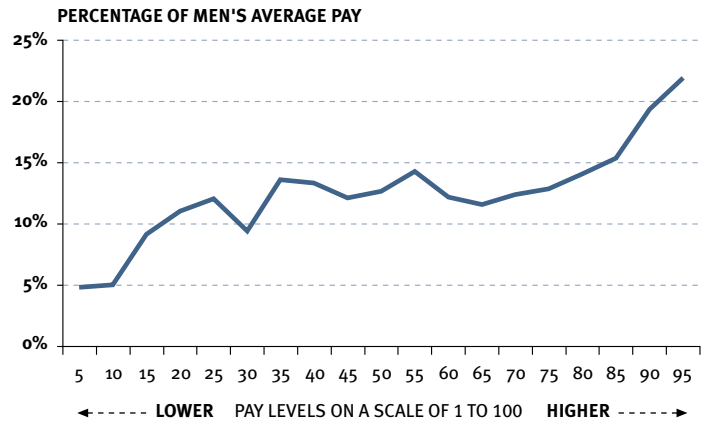
Men's and women's average hourly pay, June 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Income Survey

The size of the pay gap varies according to pay levels. There is very little gap between the lowest-paid women and the lowest-paid men. But the highest-paid women get paid up to 22% less, on average, than the highest-paid men.

The gap between men and women's average hourly pay at different pay levels, June 2004



Source: Statistics New Zealand, Income Survey

Why pay and employment inequity exists

Research into job market inequity has largely concentrated on pay. But as inequities in men's and women's employment go some way to explaining the pay gap, many of the research findings shed light on both. Researchers have found that the pay gap exists for the following reasons:

- Women have, on average, lower qualifications than men – in recent years, women have caught up and surpassed men in education, but this applies mainly to younger women who have benefited from educational reforms and who are still a minority in the workforce.
- Women have, on average, less work experience than men – this is partly because men tend to remain in work longer, and partly because many women take time out from work when they have children.
- Women's employment is still concentrated in customer service, clerical and caring occupations – jobs where wages are generally low.

It is difficult to say precisely how much of the pay gap is accounted for by these factors. But researchers think that it could be as little as 40%, or as much as 80%. Some of the gap, therefore, remains unexplained.

The differences in education, work experience and job types might explain much of the pay gap, but they do not necessarily justify it. The education effect is present because, until recently, women were disadvantaged in the education system. The work experience effect may be caused partly by women carrying most responsibility for childcare, care of other relatives and housework, and by women facing difficulties in re-entering the workforce after having children. And the occupation effect may be caused by women being restricted in their choice of career and by restrictions in their opportunities for advancement.

There's also debate around the reasons why many female-dominated occupations such as those requiring caring and personal interaction skills attract such low pay. These skills are traditionally viewed as coming more naturally to women than to men and it's sometimes argued that they are under-valued (and therefore under-paid) in the job market. This might be for a number of reasons:

- because women have traditionally applied these skills for free in the home
- because these skills have only recently been used in the workplace and are therefore not as well recognised as more traditional skills
- because the productivity of these skills is harder to measure
- because society attaches a lower value to caring than to, say, better roads or new technology.

Looking forward

It is difficult to predict what will happen to the pay gap in the future. So far, improvements have been gradual and, at times, inconsistent. However, positive action is continuing to deal with such things as entrenched male dominance and under-valuing of female skills. Recently there has been a greater focus on ensuring that work in female-dominated occupations is valued (and therefore paid) as highly as comparable work elsewhere in the job market. The following section, *Government priorities*, explains these initiatives in more detail.

Government priorities

The Government has three overarching priorities for involving women in the job market:

- to ensure that women are able to make genuine choices about their participation in the job market
- to help support the job market participation of women who choose to work
- to help working women achieve pay and employment equity with men.

The following outlines the rationale behind these aims, and the various initiatives that have been developed to tackle them.

Supporting women's choices

For many people, particularly parents of young children, the decision to participate in the job market is a difficult one because work has to be balanced with family and other responsibilities. Different families want to strike a different balance, and to vary that balance at different times. Helping people make choices about their involvement in the job market will lead to a better outcome for themselves, their partners, their children, their extended families and their communities.

There are also broader economic benefits to supporting women who want paid work. Ensuring that their talents are fully utilised and rewarded in the job market will contribute to the nation's growing prosperity by helping businesses raise their productivity and alleviate skill and labour shortages.

There are many aspects to supporting women's choices, from ensuring that women can make genuine choices about their participation by eliminating any barriers they might face to entering employment, to ensuring they are able to sustain their involvement in the job market once they find work.

HELPING WOMEN MAKE GENUINE CHOICES

Initiatives designed to eliminate barriers to participation in the job market include legislation and financial support, as well as establishing organisations that help people directly. For information about the range of services available to meet the employment needs of a broad range of people, see *Pathways to Work* in *workINSIGHT*, issue 4, May 2004.

A number of initiatives and services have also been designed specifically with caring responsibilities in mind. One of the objectives of parental leave legislation is to ensure that female employees have the option of retaining their attachment to the job market when they have a baby or adopt a child. The legislation provides that women with six months' service with the same employer are entitled to 13 weeks' paid parental leave (which can be transferred to an eligible partner). Those with 12 months' service are entitled to further unpaid leave up to a total of 52 weeks. The legislation also provides for job protection during a period of parental leave.

The Working for Families package is designed to make it easier for people to work and raise a family. Families with children may be entitled to extra money through Working for Families. The package includes increases in Family Assistance, the Accommodation Supplement and subsidies for preschool and out-of-school childcare, and from 1 April 2006 a new In-Work payment.

For mothers of young children, gaining access to quality, affordable and flexible childcare is often critical to them having the option to work. In addition to friends, relatives and nannies, there is a range of early childhood education (ECE) services and out-of-school care and recreation (OSCAR) programmes for young children. Some are parent-led, while others employ qualified teachers. There are organisations to help parents locate services and information sources to tell them about the Government's plans for the ECE sector. In the May 2005 Budget, increased funding was allocated to OSCAR providers and childcare assistance was extended to more families.

In the education arena, some Industry Training Organisations have been working with the Government to attract more women into modern apprenticeships, either by introducing modern apprenticeships into female-dominated industries, or by encouraging women to take up modern apprenticeships in industries traditionally dominated by men.

Turn to the *Pathways for Women* chart in the centre pages to find out how to access the services and information sources referred to in this section.

SUPPORTING THE JOB MARKET PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN WHO CHOOSE TO WORK

The Government believes that women will be better able to sustain their involvement in the job market if they can achieve a good work-life balance. Work-life balance is about striking the right balance between paid work and other activities such as raising children, participation in community activities, personal development and leisure time. It's not about saying that work is wrong or bad – for some people, work-life balance may be about getting more work – but it shouldn't completely crowd out the other things that matter. It is also important to emphasise that work-life balance is important for everyone; it's also different for everyone and it changes for each person at different times of their lives. There is no "one size fits all" solution.

A number of organisations collect and share information about people's work-life balance views and experiences, and the Government has just announced its response to a public consultation on work-life balance. One key part of the response is the Workplace Project, which is assisting a group of workplaces to develop and test practical, customised work-life balance tools that meet the needs of both employers and employees.

Turn to the *Pathways for Women* chart in the centre pages for information about work-life balance projects.

Achieving pay and employment equity

Achieving equity in men's and women's pay and employment opportunities can be justified purely on the grounds of social justice. But there are broader issues as well. The pay gap means that women, their children, their partners and their communities are less well off than they should be. And in economic terms, New Zealand is currently reaching the limit to which its economy can grow by getting more people into work. Instead, economic growth must be created by developing and fully utilising the skills and talents of the workforce. Employment inequities mean that, for working women, this is not happening. And pay inequities discourage some women from participating in the job market or investing in their education.

The Government has made a commitment to a five-year plan of action on pay and employment equity, following the report of the Pay and Employment Taskforce in 2004. The plan of action covers the Public Service, public health and public education sectors in phase one, with consideration to be given to how pay and employment equity can be pursued elsewhere in later phases.

A Pay and Employment Equity Unit has been established in the Department of Labour to oversee the implementation of the action plan. A key feature of the plan is developing a process for auditing pay and employment in Public Service agencies, tertiary education institutions, the compulsory schools sector, kindergartens, and District Health Boards. The Pay and Employment Equity Unit has commissioned the development of a gender-neutral job evaluation tool to improve recognition of skills and knowledge in female-dominated occupations. And the unit has been provided with a “Contestable Fund” (valued at \$1 million for 2004/05) from which grants can be awarded to fund activities that support participation in pay and employment equity processes.

Turn to the *Pathways for Women* chart in the centre pages to find out about organisations involved in pay and employment equity, and sources of further information.

Further reading about women’s involvement in the job market

A number of key documents expand on the information in this feature. These are:

- *Action Plan for New Zealand Women*, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2004 www.mwa.govt.nz
- *Framework for the Future, Equal Employment Opportunities in New Zealand*, written for the Human Rights Commission by Michael Minstrom and Jacqui True, University of Auckland, 2004 www.hrc.co.nz
- *Pay and Employment Equity in the Public Service and the Public Health and Public Education Sectors*, report of the Taskforce on Pay and Employment Equity, 2004 www.dol.govt.nz
- *Next Steps Towards Pay Equity*, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, 2002 www.mwa.govt.nz
- *Pay Inequality Between Men and Women in New Zealand*, written by Sylvia Dixon of the Department of Labour, 2000 www.dol.govt.nz
- *Understanding Reductions in the Gender Wage Differential 1997-2003*, written by Sylvia Dixon of the Department of Labour, 2004 www.dol.govt.nz
- *Women in Industry Training 2000-2003*, Industry Training Federation, 2004 www.itf.org.nz

PATHWAYS FOR WOMEN



Information sources

The **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (NACEW)** undertakes research and promotes the sharing of information about the employment of women. Browse the website for events, publications and the latest research.

☎ (04) 915 4260 ✉ nacew@dol.govt.nz www.nacew.govt.nz

The **MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS** publishes a Women's Directory on its website, which is a comprehensive list of women's groups and organisations in New Zealand. Go to www.mwa.govt.nz, click on *Publications*, then *The Women's Directory*.

WORKSITE/PAEMAHI is the place to go when you've got a question about returning to the workforce, balancing your work, family and personal interests, pay equity, childcare and more. You'll find useful links and information from a whole lot of government agencies and other organisations on the issues facing women in employment in New Zealand. Worksite is the quick and easy way to find the answers you need to make the best job, training and employment decisions. www.worksite.govt.nz

Work

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (EEO) TRUST** provides information and tools to help organisations develop versatile workplaces. It raises awareness of the business benefits of having a diverse workforce and provides relevant and current information from businesses and thought leaders around the world. Go to the EEO Trust website www.eeotrust.org.nz to find out more. Employers who want to work with the EEO Trust to achieve business success through the successful management of a diverse workforce can join the *EEO Employers Group*. To see a list of members, go to the EEO Trust website or ☎ (09) 525 3023 ✉ admin@eeotrust.org.nz.

The **MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS NOMINATIONS SERVICE** aims to increase the number of women leaders and decision-makers on state sector governance boards and committees. The Nominations Service maintains a database of women with relevant skills and experience, which is used to identify potential candidates for director positions on state sector boards. These nominations are then considered by the government agency responsible for the appointments. ☎ (04) 915 7112 ✉ mwa@mwa.govt.nz www.mwa.govt.nz

The **NZ FEDERATION OF BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN INC (BPW)** is an organisation for working women. It was created to link business and professional women to provide support, to lobby for change, and to promote ongoing advancement of the status of women. BPW has a network of clubs around New Zealand where members gain confidence and experience in organising meetings and discussing public issues. Clubs usually meet once a month in the evening for a meal, business session, guest speaker or some other activity. To find your local club ✉ info@bpwnz.org.nz or search for it on the website. www.bpwnz.org.nz

NEW ZEALAND CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP is an initiative of Massey University with a mission to promote leadership opportunities for women through education, research, consultancy and community activity. The centre's work focuses on women in management and business, women in higher education, women in self-employment, women as directors, and women as leaders in central and local government and community organisations. <http://women-leadership.massey.ac.nz>

The **CENTRE FOR WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP** also publishes a newsletter, **GENDERWRITE**, covering issues relating to women and leadership. <http://women-leadership.massey.ac.nz/genderwrite.html>

NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF GRADUATE WOMEN works locally, nationally and internationally to improve the status of women and girls, to promote lifelong education, and to enable graduate women to use their expertise to effect positive change. For information about scholarships, grants and awards for women undertaking training, education and research, opportunities to network and other member services, or to find your local branch, visit the website. www.nzfgw.org.nz

PAY EQUITY

The **DEPARTMENT OF LABOUR'S PAY AND EMPLOYMENT EQUITY UNIT** was established in 2004 to oversee the five-year action plan set out by the Taskforce on Pay and Employment Equity in the Public Service, public health and public education sectors. Go to www.dol.govt.nz/services and click on *Pay and Employment Equity*. The website also has a link to the report of the taskforce, which sets out the action plan for pay and employment equity.

The **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (EEO) TRUST** can supply the publication *Equitable Remuneration: making it fair, making it work* which is a guide for those involved in design, implementation and monitoring of fair and effective remuneration practices.

☎ (09) 525 3023 ✉ admin@eeotrust.org.nz www.eeotrust.org.nz

The **COALITION FOR EQUAL VALUE AND EQUAL PAY (CEVEP)** is a coalition of women's organisations and unions, which works to raise public awareness of the need for action and to build a national network of people committed to seeing equal pay for work of equal value implemented in New Zealand. ✉ info@cevep.org.nz www.cevep.org.nz

The **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (NACEW)** has information about pay equity on its website. Go to www.nacew.govt.nz and under *Areas of Interest*, click on *Pay Equity*.

There is a whole range of support available to people on their pathways through education. A range of products and can be ordered free of charge from the editor, Robert Heyes. A Pa



WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The **WORK-LIFE BALANCE PROJECT** is about getting more people thinking about work-life balance issues and helping more people enjoy the benefits of striking the right balance between paid work and other activities. www.dol.govt.nz/worklife/index.asp

The **EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES (EEO) TRUST** provides a range of information about work-life balance issues, including practical ideas for workplaces and summaries of flexible employment options. ☎ (09) 525 3023 ✉ admin@eeotrust.org.nz www.eeotrust.org.nz

One of the objectives of **PARENTAL LEAVE LEGISLATION** is to ensure that female employees have the option of retaining their attachment to the job market when they have a baby or adopt a child. The legislation provides that women receive job protection during a period of parental leave and are entitled to paid parental leave (which can be transferred to an eligible partner) for a specified period, depending on how long they have been working for their employer. Go to www.ers.govt.nz/parentalleave for more information and try the Department of Labour's online calculator at www.ers.govt.nz/parentalleave/calculate to find out about entitlements.

To find out about out-of-school-hours childcare providers in your local area, contact **THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR OUT OF SCHOOL CARE AND RECREATION PROGRAMMES (OSCAR)**. ☎ (09) 845 2524 ✉ maoscar@xtra.co.nz www.naoscar.org.nz

If you want to find an early childhood centre in your area or in an area you are considering moving to, contact the **MINISTRY OF EDUCATION'S RESOURCING DIVISION** (Schools and Early Childhood). ☎ (04) 463 8383

The Government recently published its **STRATEGIC PLAN FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (ECE)**. It aims to increase the participation of children and families in ECE, improve the quality of the ECE curriculum and teaching, and promote better relationships between ECE, whānau and parents, health and social services, and schools. For information, go to the Ministry of Education website www.minedu.govt.nz and on the left-hand side click on *Strategic Plan for Early Childhood Education*.

The **WORKING FOR FAMILIES** package is designed to make it easier for people to work and raise a family. Families with children may be entitled to extra money through Working for Families. To find out more about the Accommodation Supplement and Childcare Assistance, call **WORK AND INCOME** on ☎ 0800 774 004. To find out more about Family Assistance, call **INLAND REVENUE** on ☎ 0800 227 773. www.workingforfamilies.govt.nz

CAREER SERVICES provides career advice services to all New Zealanders, including women who have been out of the job market for some time. Many of their services are free. ☎ 0800 109 901 to find your nearest CareerCentre, get career advice and information over the phone at CareerPoint ☎ 0800 222 733 or get information online at www.kiwicareers.govt.nz.

The **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (NACEW)** has information about work-life balance and childcare on its website. Go to www.nacew.govt.nz and under *Areas of Interest* click on *Work-Life Balance and Childcare*.

BUSINESS NETWORKS

WOMEN'S BUSINESS NETWORK is a group of women from a very wide range of businesses and professions who meet in Wellington to share information, make contacts and learn about other women in business. The website has links to networks in other areas. www.womens-business.org.nz

WMB NETWORKX is a lively women's business networking group holding regular networking events in Auckland for enterprising Women who Mean Business. Check out the events calendar on the website. ☎ 021 575 407 ✉ contact@wmbnetworx.co.nz www.wmbnetworx.co.nz

The **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (NACEW)** has information about women's self-employment on its website. Go to www.nacew.govt.nz and under *Areas of Interest* click on *Enterprise Development*.

If you are a Māori woman wanting to start a new business or grow or improve an existing business, **TE ARA KAIPAKIHI** (Your Business Journey) may be able to help you. Contact the Ministry of Women's Affairs. ☎ (04) 915 7112 ✉ mwa@mwa.govt.nz www.mwa.govt.nz

Education and training

The **NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR THE EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN (NACEW)** has information about women's participation and achievement in education and training on its website. Go to www.nacew.govt.nz and, under *Areas of Interest*, click on *Education & Training*.

Women who are thinking about returning to education or training as mature students will find useful information on the **MATURE STUDENT PATHWAYS CHART**, published as part of *workINSIGHT*, issue 3, May 2003. Go to www.workinsight.govt.nz and, on the left-hand side, click on *Posters*.

For information about **INDUSTRY TRAINING**, contact the relevant ITO. A list of ITOs and their contact details is available on the Tertiary Education Commission website at www.tec.govt.nz/education_and_training/itos.htm.

For information about **MODERN APPRENTICESHIPS**, contact Modern Apprenticeships New Zealand. ☎ 0800 4 APPRENTICE (0800 427773) ✉ modappsinfo@tec.govt.nz www.modern-apprenticeships.govt.nz

The **INDUSTRY TRAINING FEDERATION (ITF)** is a membership-based organisation representing all 41 Industry Training Organisations (ITOs). ITOs assist industries to set standards for training, encourage workplace learning, arrange formal training classes, prepare qualifications that are needed in each industry, and assist workers to track down the workplace learning that will assist their careers. For information on how to get involved in industry training, and for a full list of ITOs, visit www.itf.org.nz or ✉ upskill@itf.org.nz.

FUNDING AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The **MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS (MWA)** has compiled a list of organisations that provide women with information about funding and scholarships on its website (MWA does not offer its own financial assistance). www.mwa.govt.nz/fundsrc.html

NEW HORIZONS FOR WOMEN TRUST makes awards to women who are returning to tertiary education and training, undertaking research on women's issues, seeking more knowledge and skills, or developing an activity that will help them build a more peaceful world. For more information on these awards, go to the website www.rokohiko.net.nz/Horizons or ✉ newhorizonsforwomentrust@hotmail.com.

, training and work. The following pathways posters (A2 size) are part of the *workINSIGHT* pathways for Women Poster (A2 size) can also be ordered. ✉ robert.heyas@dol.govt.nz



TELEPHONE



FREEPHONE



EMAIL