



Constructing Workplace Democracy

Women's Voice in New Zealand Public Services

*A survey report prepared for the Public Service Association (PSA),
Te Pūkenga Here Tikanga Mahi*

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Further information

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Finally we would like to thank all the women at PSA who participated and gave their 'voices' to this research.

Foreword



Brenda Pilott

**PSA national
secretary**



I am delighted to introduce this first independent and comprehensive survey of women in the New Zealand state sector.

The Public Service Association (PSA) has a proud history of advancing women's rights in the workplace.

At its first conference in 1914 the PSA called on the government to bring about equal pay for women. That call grew during the second-world war years as the number of women working in the public service increased dramatically. At the union's first women's conference in 1955 two delegates, Margaret Brand and Margot Jenkins, were nominated to attend the next National Congress to rally support for the issue. Finally, in 1960 the long battle seemed to be won when Parliament passed the Government Service Equal Pay Act.

But where are we fifty years after that great achievement? This report gives some very clear indications.

This survey reflects and informs the PSA's strategic agenda, which has a focus on 'decent work', and explores the engagement and work experiences of women working in the New Zealand public sector. Improving the 'voice' of women in shaping and constructing their workplaces and working lives, influencing the organisations and institutions in which they are involved, has economic, social and personal benefits. We all know that New Zealanders work long hours, and women workers feel particular pressures in managing conflicts between work and family life.

The pay gap still exists between men and women. The core public service pay and employment equity reviews in 2007/8 found an average pay gap of 18 – 30 percent; men dominate the best paid jobs; women generally work in lower paid ones and have less access than men to training and development.

The outdated approaches to reward, performance and pay systems that are still favoured by some state sector agencies, and which compound this gap, receive a luke-warm response in the survey and there is strong evidence that women who should be at the peak of their careers are finding themselves instead at a career plateau.

The survey indicates problems with management systems, skills and approaches that encourage working harder rather than smarter. Women in the PSA work at jobs that are often complex, have high skill requirements and need to meet precise quality standards. While over half of them do hundreds of unpaid extra hours each year, only 10 percent receive any additional payment for this extra work.

This survey verifies that, along with lack of influence over workloads and in the workplace, bullying and harassment continue to be major concerns. This may further indicate issues with management skill levels and approaches.

For the majority who participated in this survey the workplace is far from the flexible environment that enables and supports other aspects of life. It is imperative that we change that and this survey is an important step on that journey.

It will guide the union's strategy so that we can further advance the interests of our members. The PSA will continue to bargain and advocate for the conditions and policies that enable women working in the state sector to realise their full potential – and make their contribution to lifting the performance of the state sector.

It is vital that government and employers play their part in facilitating this progress. We challenge them to join us on that path.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "B. Pilott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a period following it.

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1. Introduction

This survey builds on the PSA's strategic agenda - *Democracy at Work* - to examine the engagement and experiences of women in publically-funded services in New Zealand. It explores how PSA women shape and construct their working lives, pursue goals and influence their workplaces and their unions. At the heart of this work are the following questions:

- What challenges do women face in their working lives?
- What access do women have to flexible working arrangements?
- What opportunities are provided them for training, development and career planning?
- In what ways are women involved in workplace decision-making?

A better understanding of women's voice and participation in New Zealand public services will contribute to what we know nationally and internationally about changing trends of women's work. The PSA will use the results of this research to shape union policy and to work towards greater democracy and equality in workplaces.

Rationale for the study

In recent years public sector organisations have sought to implement greater flexibility and tighter management processes in an attempt to improve productivity (Foley & Polanyi, 2006). In this drive for increased productivity, workers face significant and continuous change to the nature and content of their work. This pace of change, alongside greater awareness of the psychological and social impact of work have mobilised employees to seek greater input into the decisions that affect their working lives. Workplace democracy is one term used to describe this desire for input.

Discussions on workplace democracy, while long-standing, remain relevant. Traditional arguments in support of workplace democracy have cited positive economic, social (citizenship) and moral (ethical) outcomes. More recent discussions centre on the role of workplace democracy in promoting employee health and wellbeing (e.g. Kalleberg, Nesheim, & Olsen, 2009). Workplace democracy is advocated as a means of ensuring empowerment at a local employee level. It seeks to provide greater participation in corporate-decision making for employees.

Gender counts in workplace democracy discussions (Collum, 2000). While a significant gap between how much influence workers seek, and how much they currently experience generally has been identified, such an 'influence gap' is said to be larger for women than for men (Freeman &

Rogers, 1999). Further, the voice of women in shaping workplace democracy has been emphasised by rising levels of representation (particularly amongst contingent workers), shifting family structures and the multiple responsibilities that women workers often face.

This research contributes to a growing pool of public sector and academic research exploring women's participation in the New Zealand workforce and related gender issues. Previous research has investigated issues of mentoring and career plans (SSC, 2005), diversity in management (SSC, 2007), decisions about caring and working (Glendall & Fawthorpe, 2006), females in management positions (Human Rights Commission, 2008) amongst other issues (see also: McPherson, 2007; NACEW, 2008). Thus, the current research survey builds on and extends what we know about women workers in the New Zealand context.

Women workers make up approximately 60% of the PSA membership and the PSA represents around 57,000 workers in publically-funded services in New Zealand. The findings presented in this report therefore provide a useful and up-to-date gauge of experiences of women in New Zealand public services broadly.

The survey report

This survey report is the product of a research partnership between the Public Service Association (PSA) and the Industrial Relations Centre (IRC) at Victoria University of Wellington. It draws on a national survey conducted during June 2010 of 7292 women working in New Zealand publically-funded services.

After this introduction, the report is divided into seven further sections:

2. Snapshot presents a commentary on what the research tells us about women's working lives in New Zealand public services. This section then goes on to provide a selection of the key research findings.

3. Methodology outlines the survey design, distribution and approach to analysis used in the research.

4. Women PSA members profiles the PSA women who participated in this research, the work that they do and the family, caring and community responsibilities that make up their lives.

5. Flexibility at work explores how much flexibility PSA women have in their jobs and how much they can shape and influence the organisation of their daily work.

6. Influence at work looks at the nature and organisation of work of PSA women and also considers their experiences of bullying and discrimination in the workplace.

7. Constructing careers provides an analysis of how PSA women are

planning their careers and what managerial and organisational supports they have for career development.

8. Influencing unions considers the attitudes of PSA women to their union, and asks whether they see it as innovative and encouraging of member participation.

2. Snapshot: What the research tells us

This section provides a snapshot of the most important and interesting findings in the research. Overall, the research tells us that PSA women constitute a reasonably stable workforce, the majority of who enjoy 'decent work'. However, there are a number of areas relating to the capacity of these workers to influence their workplaces that demand attention as part of enhancing women's working lives in New Zealand public services. We first introduce an overview of the main messages from the research for the PSA. Specific key findings relating to a range of aspects of PSA women's work are then provided.

Overview

Decent but pressured work

Although most PSA women reported having good work-life balance and stable and decent work, there are a number of 'pressure points' which are increasing the stress and overwork of these workers.

Most of the respondents reported having relatively stable and 'decent work', along with good work-life balance.

However, much of the workforce is under significant workload and time pressures. Over half of the respondents reported working more hours than they were contracted for, with many receiving neither financial compensation nor time in lieu. Interestingly, in terms of workplace influence, most PSA women who responded felt that they had little influence over their workloads or the working of additional hours.

There were variations in access to flexible working arrangements. Time pressure and workloads are barriers to flexible arrangements as are fears around job security. Thus, it is the operational or day-to-day management of flexible working that prevents its uptake. The individual is then left to manage flexible working rather than the organisation. Most respondents were unaware of the flexible working arrangements amendment in the Employment Relations Act 2007.

Respondents have busy and full working lives that include full-time work, caring responsibilities and serving the public in many ways beyond their paid work. The diverse mix of paid and unpaid responsibilities suggests that work/ life balance policies affect much more than just working parents.

Evidence of unfair and discriminatory

While contractual and legislative protections are in place for the majority of PSA women, many report unfair management processes and high rates of bullying and discrimination.

practices

Many PSA women rate their supervisors as being able to discern good and poor performance but are critical of how performance itself is managed and, in particular, the fair allocation of rewards based on performance. They cannot negotiate their pay and feel that they are not properly consulted or involved in change processes within their organisation.

Furthermore, results are consistent with other research (SSC, 2010) which suggests that bullying is a problem in the New Zealand publically-funded services sector. Two out of five PSA women reported having experienced bullying of some kind in their workplace, while almost a third reported discriminatory practices. Bullying has risks to productivity and is a marker of low skill and low supervisor accountability in work environments (Estes 2008).

Perhaps reflecting the widespread experience of unfair practices almost one third of respondents had spoken to their union about a work-related issue.

Requirement for clearer pathways to develop future working lives

PSA women report that there are a number of supportive processes in place for training and development and support of their careers. However, there is a lack of clear career pathways within the respondents' organisations through which they might progress their careers.

Many respondents lack clear progression opportunities. As the workforce ages, risks from career plateauing – which has productivity and wellbeing implications - begin to rise. Career opportunities that allow workers to refresh and reinvent their skills and careers might be important both to workers and the state sector.

Applying a systems perspective to these broad research findings might suggest that increasing work pressure, uncertain career pathways, and unfair or inconsistent performance management practices combine to create a negative cycle in which unfair, bullying or discriminatory practices are enabled. In order to enhance the working lives of women in publically-funded services it is likely that these issues will need to be addressed in combination.

Key findings

Profile of the respondents

- 7,292 PSA women completed this survey.
- A typical respondent profile has the following characteristics:
 - 46 years of age
 - a New Zealand European/ Pakeha
 - work full-time
 - more highly educated than the national average
 - paid above the New Zealand wage and salary average
 - married
 - involved in community life through voluntary work in the areas of sport, education, health/social support or religious spiritual activities.
- Despite these broad trends, respondents were also very diverse. They were employed by over 280 workplaces, earned from less than \$25,000 to \$200,000 per year, ranged in age from 19-80 years, identified with a range of ethnicities, had wide variation of education backgrounds, and were almost as likely to have primary caring responsibilities of children or other adults than not.

Representation of employers and occupations

- Respondents represented workplaces operating in New Zealand public services including government departments, local government, the health sector, crown agencies, state-owned enterprises and community and government-funded agencies.
- The largest occupational group was clerical and administrative workers, making up 27.8% of the respondents.

Flexibility at work

- Overall most PSA women reported having good work-life balance.
- While most PSA women have some degree of flexibility with the scheduling of their work hours, over a third work fixed hours with no, or limited, ability to change their working schedules.
- With regard to flexible work arrangements, it was found that just over half of those surveyed have accessed flexitime arrangements in the previous 12 months. While only one in ten worked from home during normal work hours and one in fifty availed of job sharing arrangements in the previous year.
- While over half of those surveyed work more hours than they are contracted for, only one in ten receive financial compensation for their additional work.
- Four out of five respondents reported being unfamiliar with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 and less than one in ten had formally requested flexible working arrangements under the Act in the previous 12 months.

- Two out of five had taken no leave apart from annual leave in the previous 12 months. The majority of these women felt prevented from taking leave due to the nature of their work (in particular, workloads and time pressures) and 'not wanting to burden' their co-workers.

Influence at work

- While most PSA women have some degree of influence over most aspects of their work, they have little influence over workloads and the working of additional hours. Higher levels of influence were reported over the timing of annual leave and rest times at work.
- Results indicate that there are high cognitive demands from the type of work that PSA women do. Most jobs are complex; require continuous learning, the meeting of precise quality standards, individual problem solving and some form of self assessment of work quality.
- Most PSA women work within jobs that are structured into teams. These teams are, however, not autonomous with their membership, leadership and division of tasks the primary responsibility of the team leader.
- In the previous 12 months, most respondents reported having direct communication with their immediate line manager about their work performance and work-related problems. A slightly lower number of PSA women reported being consulted about changes to their work or working conditions. Almost a third of respondents had spoken to their PSA representative in the last 12 months about work-related problems.
- About half of the respondents were satisfied with the degree of influence that they had over their job and the control they had of their workload. But there was a large minority that were dissatisfied with these aspects of their work.
- Respondents were ambivalent about their fit with employer's values and their ability to express their views freely in their organisation. Moreover, consultation in change processes was seen to be poorly managed.

Bullying and discrimination

- Two out of five women reported that they have experienced bullying in their current workplace.
- In addition, almost one in three had felt discriminated against within their workplace. The primary bases for discrimination reported were gender, employment status, age and ethnicity.

Career pathways and development

- PSA Women members constitute a reasonably stable workforce. Over half hoped to stay in their organisation in their current jobs or in a higher or different position in the future. Intention to progress in one's career was significantly related to age of respondents.
- In the preceding 12 months just over half of PSA women had discussed and planned for their development and career goals with their managers.
- Nevertheless, respondents indicated that there were not clear career pathways or good prospects for career achievement in their current positions.
- Overall, perceptions of career opportunities and support varied for workers in different working contexts including employment status and occupation.

Influencing the union

- Ratings of PSA innovation and decentralisation are moderate, with a reasonable consistency in member responses. Respondents saw the union to be open to their participation and less so, as innovative.
- Beyond the primary issues of pay, conditions and security, the respondents prioritised the handling of grievances, equity issues, and informing members of activities for PSA activity.
- There was moderate support for other union activities such as "Getting workers a say in how they do their jobs", "Getting workers a say in how their employers run the organisation", and "Participating in public debate about how things are done in the State sector". Such activities might help raise perceptions of union innovation, but some members might take some persuading that taking up these new activities was the right thing for the union to do.

3. Methodology

Survey design This survey invited the views of PSA women on a diverse range of issues relating to their voice and influence in their working lives.

In addition to useful demographic information about PSA women members and their work, this comprehensive survey invited women's views on a diverse range of issues relating to their voice and influence in their working lives. Based upon existing national and international survey work, this survey explored women workers' experiences and views around the following topics:

- Caring responsibilities
- Flexibility at work
- Degree of influence at work and in organisations
- Bullying and discrimination at work
- Career plans, pathways and development opportunities
- Union priorities and involvement

The survey was developed by a group of researchers from the IRC at Victoria Management School and hosted online by the PSA. Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Pipitea Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University of Wellington.

Survey distribution An email was sent to 33,304* women members of the PSA inviting them to participate in this survey. Further invitations to participate were included in the PSA Newsletter and other union communication. Participation in this survey was on a voluntary basis. Members without email access were offered alternative ways to participate.

The online survey was open for completion for 3 weeks between the 3rd of June and the 24th of June 2010. 7,292 valid responses were received, representing a response rate of 21.9%.

The anonymity of respondents was ensured through the removal of identifying information from individual responses. Two follow up reminders were sent to respondents with unique coded URL inactivated links (unique coded URLs).

Analysis While 7292 respondents completed the survey, the reported numbers responding to each question vary due to filtering respondents through some questions and some non-responses to specific questions.

The data were analysed using the SPSS statistical software package and the findings of which are presented below. All statements made about relationships between multiple variables are statistically significant at the $p < 0.01$ level.

*Some of the over 40,000 PSA women members did not receive the survey due to limited internet access, out-of-date contact addresses or constrained internet use policy or IT capability of employing organisations.

4. Women PSA Members

Who are they? What work do they do? And what family and caring responsibilities do they have?

This section provides a summary demographic profile of the respondents. For this profile respondents were asked a series of questions about their age, ethnicity, qualifications, marital status, household structure and caring responsibilities. In addition, information about respondent's current working context and other family and community responsibilities was gathered. It is essential to consider these aspects together as they combine to shape how, and, in what ways, women are able to participate in their professional working lives.

A profile of PSA women members in this research can be drawn from common characteristics shared by the respondent group. A typical respondent would be:

- 46 years of age
- a New Zealand European or Pakeha
- work full-time
- more highly educated than the national average
- paid above the New Zealand wage and salary average
- married
- Involved in community life through voluntary work in the areas of sport, education, health/social support, or religious/spiritual activities.

Key findings

Despite these broad trends, respondents were found to be very diverse. They were employed by over 280 employers, earned from less than \$25,000 to \$200,000 per year, ranged in age from 19-80 years, identified with a range of ethnicities, had wide variation of education backgrounds, and were just as likely to have primary caring responsibilities of children or other adults than not.

The respondents

Age

The respondents were aged between 19-80 years old. The largest group of respondents was aged between 45-54 years with an approximate average age of 46 years. This is higher than the Department of Labour projections for 2012 where 50% of the NZ labour force will be older than 42 years of age (DOL, 2007). This finding, taken alongside the lower and increasing representation of workers in the age groups 25-34 years and 35-44 years, respectively indicates an ageing female workforce in the public service.

Table 4.1 Age of respondents

Age groups	n	%
24 years or younger	169	2.4
25-34 years	1017	14.4
35-44 years	1725	24.5
45-54 years	2322	32.7
55-64 years	1621	23.1
65 years or older	204	2.9
Non response	234	3.2
Total	7292	100.00

Ethnicity

The majority of respondents identified as New Zealand European/ Pakeha. Just over 30% of the respondents identified with one or more other ethnic minority groups. 15.4% of the respondent group identified as Maori, thus representing a larger proportion than in the New Zealand workforce at large (14.9%) (DOL, 2008).

Table 4.2 Ethnicity of respondents

Ethnicity	n	%*
New Zealand European or Pakeha	5079	69.7
Maori	1121	15
Pacific Islander	363	5.0
Asian	249	3.4
Other European	723	9.9
Other	612	8.4
Total	8147	111.8

*Percentages add to >100% because respondents could select all that apply.

Education

The respondents of the survey had a higher than average educational level. Over 70% of the respondents had a post-high school certificate or higher. 42.7% of the respondents had obtained a bachelor degree or higher. This compares to just 21% of the New Zealand working population holding a bachelor degree or higher in 2008 (Stats NZ, 2008).

Table 4.3 Highest level of qualification obtained

Level of qualification	n	%
Primary/Junior	66	0.9
Secondary	1913	26.2
Post-high school certificate	953	13.1
Post-high school diploma	1148	15.7
Bachelor degree	1722	23.6
Post-graduate degree	1391	19.1
Non-response	99	1.4
Total	7292	100

Dis/ability

12.3% of the respondents indicated that they had a long term health condition that had an impact on their daily activities.

The respondents' work

This section describes aspects of the respondents' employment. It considers the employer, occupations, employment status, annual earnings and length of time the respondents have worked for their employers.

Employer

The respondents represented over 280 workplaces operating in New Zealand publically-funded services, including government departments, local government, the health sector, crown agencies, state-owned enterprises and community and government-funded agencies. Some of the largest groups of respondents included the following:

- 24% of respondents were employed by District Health Boards (1716 responses).
- 8% were employed by local government (583 responses).
- 7% were employed by the IRD (521 responses).
- 35% were employed by government departments (2525 responses); the largest group of which were employed by the Ministry of Social Development.

Occupation

The respondents were drawn from a range of occupations. The biggest group was clerical and administrative workers making up 27.8% of respondents.

Table 4.4 Occupational grouping of respondents*

Occupation	n	%
Clerical and Administrative Worker	2028	27.8
Social, Health and Education Worker	1059	14.5
Information Professional	485	6.7
Manager, tier 1, 2, & 3	368	5.1
Contact centre Worker	209	2.9
Policy Analyst	183	2.5
Inspectors and Regulatory Officer	184	2.5
Legal, HR and Finance Professional	106	1.5
ICT Professionals and Technician	112	1.5
Other Occupation	1359	18.6
Other Professionals not elsewhere included	918	12.6
Non-response	281	3.8
Total	7292	100.0

*Occupational categories were based on those used by the State Services Commission.

Length of time with current employer

76.9% of the respondents had been working in their organisation for more than 3 years, and almost a third of all respondents (28.5%) had been working in their organisation for over 11 years.

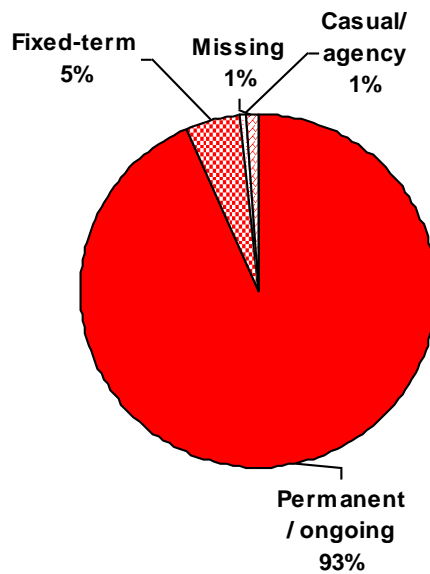
Table 4.5 Length of time with current employer

Length of time	n	%
Less than 1 year	450	6.2
1 to 2 years	1190	16.3
3 to 5 years	1929	26.5
6 to 10 years	1599	21.9
More than 10 years	2077	28.5
Non-response	47	0.6
Total	7292	100.0

Employment status A range of different kinds of employment agreements governed the work of the respondents.

87% of the respondents were working full-time and 12.3% were working part-time. 93.2% of respondents were employed under a permanent or ongoing agreement. Two much smaller, though still distinguishable types of agreement were fixed term agreements (5.1%) or casual/agency agreements (0.6%). Self-employment and seasonal work employment was negligible.

Figure 4.1 Type of employment agreement



Wages and salary The majority of respondents earned a gross annual salary of \$40,000 or more. The median and mode salary range was \$40,000-\$59,000 (estimated average \$43,185 per annum before tax). 32% of the respondents earned \$60,000 or more (gross) per year.

Table 4.6 Salary range of respondents

Gross annual salary	n	%
Less \$25,000	290	4.0
\$25,000 to \$39,999	1228	16.8
\$40,000 to \$59,999	3339	45.8
\$60,000 to \$79,999	1788	24.5
\$80,000 to \$99,999	438	6.0
\$100,000 to \$149,999	89	1.2
\$150,000 to \$199,999	12	0.2
Non-response	108	1.5
Total	7292	100.0

These results compare with an annual income for all wage and salary earners in New Zealand of \$39,520, and for all women wage and salary earners of \$32,760 (StatsNZ, 2009). The average wage and salary rate for PSA women found here reflects the respondents' comparatively older age and higher than average level of education.

Contribution to household income

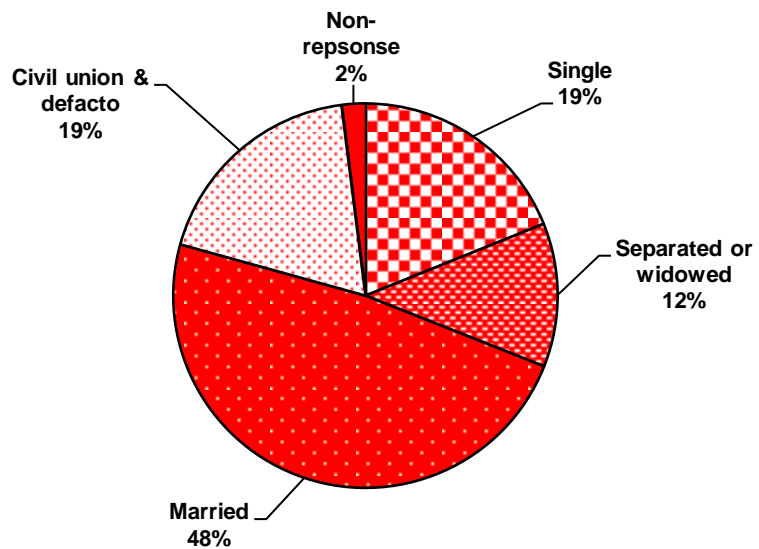
While the respondents earned above median wages, only 26% contributed the largest amount to their household income. 54.6% of the respondents lived with another household member who contributed financially more than them and 18.7% of respondents contributed about the same as other members of their household income.

Family status and caring responsibilities

Family status

67.0% of all respondents were married or were living in a civil union or de facto relationship. 31.0% were single, separated or widowed. The majority of those selecting 'other' specified that they were divorced.

Figure 4.2 Family status



Caring responsibilities

Two out of five respondents indicated that they had primary caring responsibilities for a child or adult. The majority cared for dependent children and/or sick, disabled or elderly adults.

Caring for dependent children	<p>31.4% reported that they had primary caring responsibilities for at least one child under 18 years of age. This is comparable to a national average of approximately 32% of New Zealand women in the general population who provide unpaid care for children under 18 years of age in their household (Fursman & Callister, 2009).</p> <p>Of those providing childcare for children less than 18 years of age, the most common age group of dependent children was 13-18 year olds. 19% (n=1401) of the respondents had at least one child in this age group. Only 12% (n=870) of the respondents had at least one dependent child under the age of 5 years. This finding aligns with the average age of the respondents.</p>
Caring for disabled or sick adults	<p>0.6% and 2.1% of PSA women cared for disabled or sick adults respectively and 8.8% of respondents indicated they had primary caring responsibilities for their own or their spouse's elderly parents.</p>
Multiple caring responsibilities	<p>7.2% of respondents had two or more primary caring responsibilities. A large group of these women workers (43%) carried the dual responsibility of caring for children under 18 years of age and elderly parents. There are significant tensions between paid work and their caring responsibilities for this group of workers who have previously been described as the 'sandwich generation' (CPSU, 2010; Zal, 2001).</p>

Community involvement

<i>Voluntary work in the community</i>	<p>There was a high rate of community involvement by PSA women. The majority of respondents had volunteered their free time in community activities over the previous 12 months (77%). 38% of PSA women contributed their time regularly to at least two different areas of the community.</p> <p>Almost half of the respondents had volunteered their time to support sporting activities (46.9%), then educational activities (35.4%), 'health or social support' activities (32.3%) and religious or spiritual activities (27.7%). 13.5% of respondents indicated that they had volunteered their time at least once during the last 12 months to trade union activities.</p> <p>The community activities in which PSA women were most regularly involved (on an occasional to regular monthly basis), were sporting activities, educational activities, Iwi, Hapu or Whanau activities, and religious activities (in that order).</p>
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5: Flexibility at work

How much flexibility do PSA women have in their work?

This section examines the access that PSA women have to flexible working arrangements within their workplaces. To assess the factors that might influence women's access to flexible working, respondents were asked a series of questions around work-life 'fit', working time arrangements, overtime working, access to childcare, and their familiarity with flexible working legislation. International research notes that the provision of flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies have an important role to play in granting women equal access to jobs and career advancement.

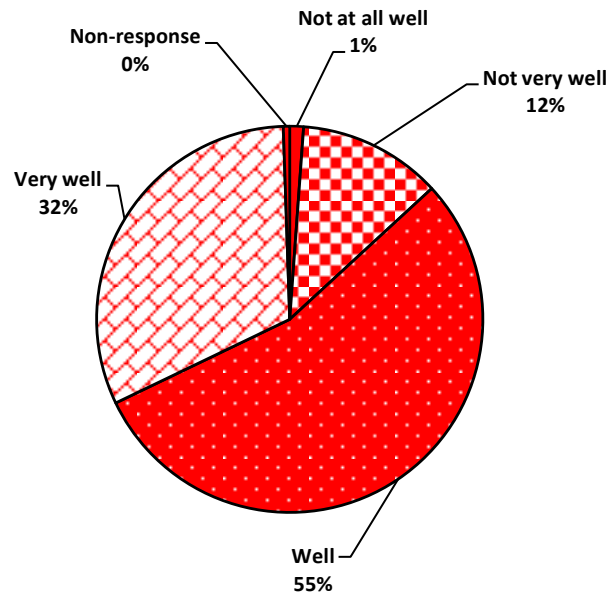
Key findings

- Overall most PSA women reported having good work-life balance.
- While most PSA women have some degree of flexibility with the scheduling of their work hours, over a third work fixed hours with no, or limited, ability to change their working schedules.
- With regard to flexible work arrangements, it was found that just over half of those surveyed have accessed flexitime arrangements in the previous 12 months. While only one in ten worked from home during normal work hours and one in fifty availed of job sharing arrangements in the previous year.
- While over half of those surveyed work more hours than they are contracted for, only one in ten receive financial compensation for their additional work.
- Four out of five respondents reported being unfamiliar with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007 and less than one in ten had formally requested flexible working arrangements under the Act in the previous 12 months.
- Two out of five had taken no leave apart from annual leave in the previous 12 months. The majority of these women felt prevented from taking leave due to the nature of their work (in particular, workloads and time pressures) and 'not wanting to burden' their co-workers.

Flexible work arrangements

Work-life fit

When questioned about the balance between their work and their commitments outside of work, the majority of PSA women members (86.3%) indicated that their current work arrangements fit 'well' or 'very well' with their commitments outside of work. Only 13.2% of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their current work-life fit.

Figure 5.1 Work-life fit

While both full-time and part-time workers indicated that their work fits 'well' or 'very well' with their other commitments, part-time workers (n= 896) indicated a higher level of work-life fit (mean 3.46) than full-time workers (mean 3.13).

Those with dependent children under the age of 18 years reported slightly, but statistically significant, lower levels of work-life fit than those with no dependent children (mean 3.13 vs. 3.21, respectively).

Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a significant noted difference in perceptions of work-life fit between groups of workers who have 1) no, or, limited flexibility, 2) those with some flexitime arrangements, or 3) those with autonomy to set their own working time arrangements. Those with greater autonomy to set their work schedules reported the highest levels of work-life fit, while those with little or limited flexibility in the setting of their work hours reported the lowest level of work-life fit.

Correspondingly, these groups of workers were also found to vary on satisfaction with the influence, control and manager support they experienced in their work i.e. Workers who had greater autonomy in their work were amongst the most satisfied group of workers on these issues.

Flexible working hours

To gain an understanding of the degree of flexibility PSA women members have over the structure of their work hours, respondents were asked to indicate how their working time arrangements are set.

Over half of the PSA women who responded (56.8%) indicated that they have some degree of flexibility with the scheduling of their work hours. In

contrast, over a third (37.2%) of respondents reported having to work fixed hours with no ability to change, or, having to choose between fixed working time schedules. Only a small proportion (2.2%) of PSA women reported complete autonomy in relation to the setting of their work hours.

Table 5.1 Flexible working hours

	n	%
My hours are fixed by the organisation with no possibility for change	2269	31.1
I can choose between several fixed working schedule determined by the organisation (incl. Shift work)	448	6.1
I can vary my working hours within certain limits (e.g. Flexitime)	4142	56.8
My working hours are entirely determined by myself	157	2.2
Other	167	2.3
Non-response	109	1.5
Total	7292	100

Flexible working arrangements

When asked more specifically about the uptake of flexible working arrangements within their workplaces, most respondents (54.4%) indicated accessing flexitime arrangements (flexible start and finish times) in the previous 12 months. In contrast, 12.2% reported that they had worked from home during normal work hours and only 1.9% reported availing of job sharing arrangement in the previous year.

Table 5.2: Flexible work arrangements

	n	%
Flexitime (flexible start and finish times)	3969	54.4
Working from home during normal working hours	888	12.2
Job sharing (two or more people share a full time position)	140	1.9
None of these apply	2578	35.4

Overtime arrangements

Overtime or additional hours are often used by organisations as a means of dealing with increases in workload. This research found that over half (51.5%) of those PSA women who responded work more hours than they are contracted to work. And of those who work more than they are contracted for, only 14% receive financial compensation, while 84% receive no financial payment for those additional hours.

In looking at those respondents who work additional hours and receive no financial compensation (n=3161), it was found that 44% also have no opportunity to 'bank' the additional time worked. This shows that 18% of all PSA women surveyed have worked overtime, received no financial compensation and were unable to bank their additional time worked.

Table 5.3 : Overtime work arrangements

	n	%
Work more than contracted working hours	3758	51.5
Do not work more than contracted working hours	3475	47.7
Non-response	59	0.8
Total	7292	100

Table 5.4 Financial compensation for overtime

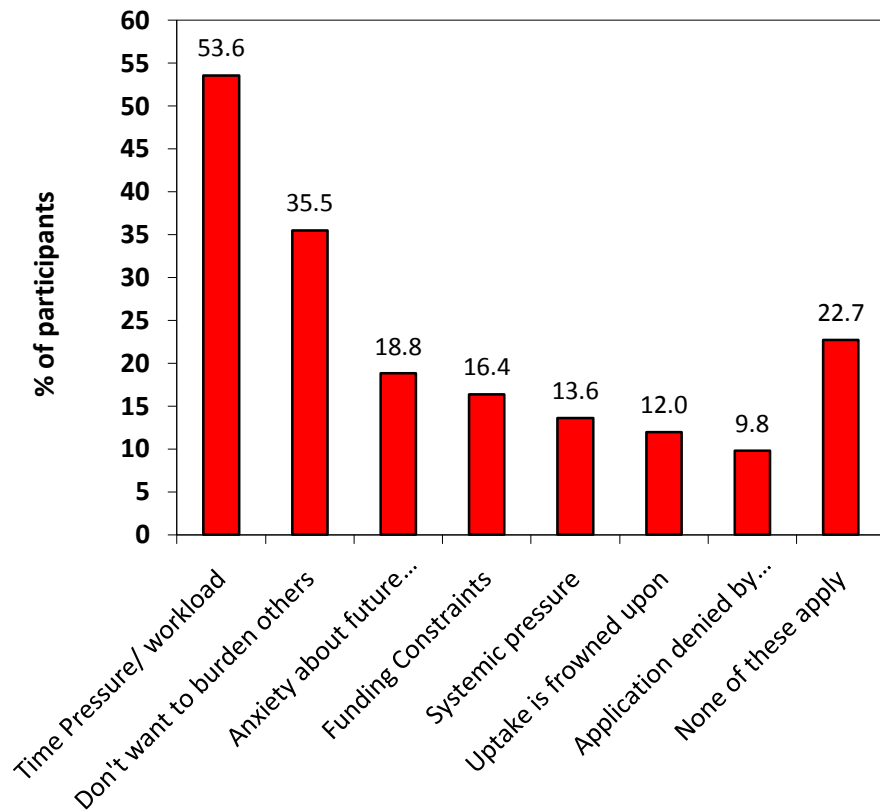
	n	%
Receive financial compensation for additional hours works	534	14.2
Do not receive financial compensation for additional hours worked	3161	84.1
Non-response	63	1.7
Total	3758	100

Access to flexible work arrangements

In examining the factors that might prevent a woman from accessing flexible work arrangements, respondents were asked to identify, from a list, the issues preventing them from accessing flexible working.

Preventing women from accessing flexible work arrangements are factors relating to the nature of their work. Workloads and time pressures exert the greatest barrier (53.6%) to accessing flexible work arrangements. Not wanting to burden work colleagues was also noted by over a third (35.5%) of respondents, while anxiety over future job security was noted by 18.8%. For one in ten it is the culture of their organisation or management rejection of their application that prevented them from accessing flexible work arrangements.

Figure 5.2 Factors preventing access to flexible working arrangements.



Flexible working legislation

To assess familiarity with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007, respondents were asked about their knowledge and usage of the Act. This research found that most PSA women surveyed (59.3%) were not familiar with the legislation pertaining to flexible working arrangements.

In terms of usage of the legislation, only 7.3% (n= 534) indicated that they had made a formal request for flexible working arrangements under the Act. However, of those who formally applied for flexible working arrangements under the legislation, 76.4% (n=408) were given approval by their employer.

Table 5.5: Familiarity with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007

	n	%
Familiar with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007	2889	39.6
Not Familiar with the Employment Relations (Flexible Working Arrangements) Amendment Act 2007	4325	59.3
Non-response	78	1.1
Total	7292	100.0

Leave

Leave provisions

In considering the availability and uptake of leave provision, respondents were asked about the types of leave provision they had accessed in the previous 12 months. The findings show that most respondents (77.5%) took paid sick leave for on average 6 days in the previous 12 month. Nearly a quarter of respondents (23.9%) indicated that they had taken bereavement/tangihanga leave for an average of 3 days in the previous 12 months, while just 12.1% took family-related leave for on average 4 days. Interestingly, paid parental leave was the least accessed leave provision amongst respondents, with only 1.5% of PSA women availing of paid parental leave in the previous 12 months. Of those who did avail of paid parental leave in the previous year, it was found that this leave was for on average 142 days (just over 28 weeks). Despite the broad range of leave provision, 43% of respondents took no leave apart from their annual entitlement in the previous 12 months.

Table 5.6 Uptake of leave provisions

	n	%
Paid Sick Leave	5653	77.5
Paid Bereavement/ Tangihanga Leave	1742	23.9
Paid Family-Related Leave	881	12.1
Paid Educational Leave	656	9.0
Paid Carer's Leave	502	6.9
Paid Parental Leave	108	1.5
Leave without Pay	620	8.5
No leave other than annual leave	3139	43.0

Childcare

Childcare facilities

The provision of childcare facilities in the workplace is seen to provide women with greater work-life balance and to encourage greater labour market participation. Of those PSA women surveyed it was found that only 13.2% (n=963) reported availing of childcare facilities during working hours. While this figure reflects the fact that the most common age group of dependent children are 13-18 years of age and therefore unlikely to require childcare facilities, it also exceeds the 12% (n=870) of women who have at least one child under 5 years of age. This suggests that a small proportion of women surveyed avail of childcare facilities during work hours for dependent children over 5 years of age.

Of this group of childcare users, it was found that most (93.5%) access childcare facilities outside of their work sites, while just 4.4% access on-site childcare facilities. Strikingly, for most women (92.8%) (n= 894) who access childcare facilities during work hours, their employer offers no subsidy towards their childcare.

Table 5.7 Location of childcare facilities

	n	%
On-site childcare facilities	42	4.4
Off-site childcare facilities	900	93.5
None apply	21	2.1
Total	963	100.0

Satisfaction with access to childcare

Of those accessing childcare facilities during work hours, just over half (50.4%) were satisfied with the ease of access to childcare facilities. Almost a fifth of those who use childcare facilities during work hours (19.4%) reported that they were dissatisfied with their ease of access.

Table 5.8 Level of satisfaction with ease of access to childcare facilities

	n	%
Very dissatisfied/ dissatisfied	187	19.4
Neither satisfied or dissatisfied	279	29.0
Satisfied/ Very satisfied	486	50.4
Non-response	11	1.2
Total	963	100

6. Influence at work

How much say to PSA women have in organising their work?

In this section we report on the opportunities that PSA women have to influence and participate in decision-making processes within their workplaces. Respondents were asked a series of questions about the opportunities and the amount of influence that they had over the organisation of their work their working conditions; and the level of consultation experienced. Questions were also asked regarding the issue of bullying and discrimination within workplaces.

Key findings

- While most PSA women have some degree of influence over most aspects of their work, they have little influence over workloads and the working of additional hours. Higher levels of influence were reported over the timing of annual leave and rest times at work.
- Results indicate that there are high cognitive demands from the type of work that PSA women do. Most jobs are complex; require continuous learning, the meeting of precise quality standards, individual problem solving and some form of self assessment of work quality.
- Most PSA women work within jobs that are structured into teams. These teams are, however, not autonomous with their membership, leadership and division of tasks the primary responsibility of the team leader.
- In the previous 12 months, most respondents reported having direct communication with their immediate line manager about their work performance and work-related problems. A slightly lower number of PSA women reported being consulted about changes to their work or working conditions. Almost a third of respondents had spoken to their PSA representative in the last 12 months about work-related problems.
- About half of the respondents were satisfied with the degree of influence that they had over their job and the control they had of their workload. But there was a large minority that were dissatisfied with these aspects of their work.
- Respondents were ambivalent about their fit with employer's values and their ability to express their views freely in their organisation. Moreover, consultation in change processes was seen to be poorly managed.
- 2 out of 5 women reported that they have experienced bullying in their current workplaces. In addition, almost one in three had felt discriminated against within their workplace. The primary bases for discrimination reported were gender, employment status, age and ethnicity.

Influencing work organisation

Influence and autonomy within workplaces

To assess the degree of influence and autonomy that PSA women have at work, respondents were asked a number of questions regarding their ability to influence work processes (nature of control over the pace, methods and order of tasks); their ability to take a break when needed and their ability to influence the organisation of work itself (workload and overtime).

The majority of respondents indicated that they had a good level of control and influence over some aspects of their work. PSA women indicated that they had more autonomy over the timing of their holidays (75.2%) and their rest times at work (71.3%). Over half of the respondents also reported having the freedom to exercise control over work process. 69.5% reported a high degree of influence over the order in which they completed their work tasks, while 54.8% and 48.6% reported having control over the pace at which they work and the method of work, respectively.

Where respondents have the least amount of influence or autonomy at work is in relation to their workloads and the working of additional hours. Most respondents (44.3%) reported having little influence over their workload and almost two thirds (61.9%) noted limited influence over the working of additional hours.

Table 6.1 Degree of influence over work

	Never/ Rarely	Some- times	Often/ Always	Non- response
When you take your holidays or days off	3.9	19.8	75.2	1.1
When you take your breaks	9.5	17.3	71.3	1.9
The order of tasks	9.6	19.9	69.5	0.9
The speed or rate of work	16.6	27.1	54.8	1.4
The method of work	22.1	26.9	48.6	2.3
Working additional hours	30.3	31.6	34.4	3.7
Your workload	44.3	30.9	22.9	2.0

*Table reports percentages of the respondent group.

Nature of work

Looking at the nature of work themselves, respondents were asked a series of questions about the cognitive dimensions of their work. In particular, this research examined the use of quality standards in the work process, the complexity of work and the need to acquire new skills.

Most PSA women (87.3%) surveyed operate within jobs that must meet precise quality standards. In addition, most respondents (83.2%) must

assess their work for themselves. In relation to job complexity, it was found that PSA women regard their jobs as involving complex tasks (87.1%), involving the solving of unforeseen problems (83.1%) and requiring the learning of new things (91.8%).

These results indicate that PSA women consider their work to be intellectually demanding, even though most report that their jobs involve a significant number of straight-forward or repetitive tasks.

Table 6.2 Nature of work

Percentages of respondents who's work involves the following:	
Learning new things	91.8
Meeting precise quality standards	87.3
Complex tasks	87.1
Assessing yourself the quality of your own work	83.2
Solving unforeseen problems on your own	83.1
Straight-forward or repetitive tasks	77.6

Team working

When asked about the structure of their jobs, 69.2% (n=5049) indicated that they work in teams. Of those respondents who work in teams, it was found that the team leader (57.3%) decides on the division of tasks, in only a third (34.8%) of respondents are the team members empowered to make decisions regarding the division of tasks. Again in terms of team leadership it is the team leader (68.2%) who has authority for leading the team. Team membership is again mostly at the team leader's discretion (53.4%). Where team members have greater autonomy is over the time allocated for each task (55.5%).

Table 6.3 Nature of autonomy in team working

	Team leader	Team members	Other	Non-response
Division of tasks	57.3	34.8	6.7	1.2
Team leadership	68.2	14.1	15.9	1.9
Team membership	53.4	24.3	19.9	2.5
Time allocated for each task	28.5	55.5	13.8	2.2

*Table reports percentages of the respondent group.

Communication and consultation in the workplace

To assess the nature of communication and consultation operating within their workplaces, respondents were asked a series of questions regarding the level and nature of workplace voice they experienced in the previous 12 months.

Results suggest frequent communication between PSA women and management in the previous 12 months. Most PSA women who responded indicated that they had a discussion with their immediate line manager over the last 12 months about their work performance (74.6%) or about work-related problems (80.9%). In the same time period 29.1% indicated similar discussions with their employee representative about work-related problems. This level of communication with employee representatives is higher than the on average one in five reported within Europe (European foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007).

Levels of consultation were found to be slightly lower, with 70.6% reporting that they had been consulted about changes to their workplaces in the previous year.

Table 6.4 Communication and consultation within workplaces

	n	%
Discussed work-related problems with immediate line manager	5896	80.9
Frank discussion with line manager about your work performance	5439	74.6
Discussed ideas about improving the job/work with your immediate line manager	5334	73.1
Been consulted about changes in your work/working conditions	5148	70.6
Had a formal assessment of your work performance	5008	68.7
Discussed work-related problems with an employee representative	2120	29.1

We were also interested in how PSA women felt that their broader organisation reflected their own values and to what extent they felt free to contribute their ideas within their organisation. We asked the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with three statements about their values fit and influence in their organisation.

Table 6.5 Values fit within the organisation

	Mean*	Median
My values are reflected in those of the organisation	3.28	3
I have the opportunity to express my views freely	3.21	3
Change processes such as consultation and participation are well handled by my employer	2.81	3

*On a 5-point agreement scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 5=strongly agree).

These results indicate moderate perceptions of respondents’ fit with their employers’ values, perceptions of change processes, and belief that views can be expressed freely. Change processes are rated worst.

However, there was a large range of responses to these questions which suggests that there is variation across the respondents. This suggests that although on average things are OK, there are meaningfully sized pockets of poor values fit, badly handled change processes, and poor opportunity to express views.

Performance management

We asked respondents to assess whether performance was capably evaluated and managed by their supervisors or managers. In general most respondents perceive performance to be poorly managed by their supervisors or managers. The largest groups of respondents reported that good performance was not rewarded by management and that good performers were likely to receive equivalent rewards as poor performers.

Table 6.6 Performance management*

	Disagree	Neither	Agree
Supervisors know how to appraise performance	25.7	27.9	45.4
Good performers are rewarded by management	46.5	27.3	25.0
Poor performers receive the same rewards as good performers	20.6	32.1	45.8
Poor performers are monitored by management	33.4	32.1	33.0

*Table reports percentages of the respondent group.

Despite these findings, 52% of the respondents reported satisfaction with the amount of support they personally received from their manager. This left over a quarter of respondents who were dissatisfied with their manager support (24.6%) (Others were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, 22.1%).

Bullying and discrimination

Bullying

Bullying appears to be an important issue affecting PSA women. Respondents were asked if there had been any time that they had felt bullied in their current workplace. 43% (n=3123) responded that they have felt bullied in their current workplace at some point.

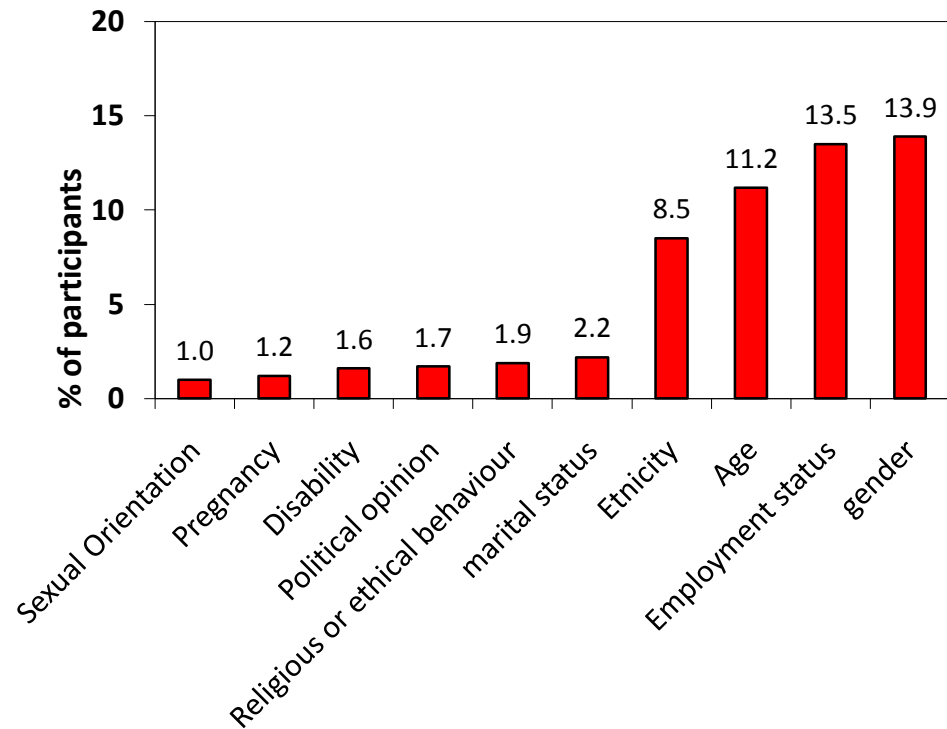
In qualitative comments the respondents referred to a range of diverse organisational and personal circumstances in which they felt bullied. It is expected that more detailed analysis of these qualitative data in the future will shed light on the precise nature of bullying experienced by PSA women.

Bullying in the workplace is an area which is under-researched internationally because getting good empirical data about the issues involved is difficult. Nevertheless, there are some indications that bullying is a pervasive problem in public sector organisations more broadly. A recent related survey of women members of the Australian Community and Public Service Union (CPSU, 2010) reported a smaller - although still significant - group of their respondents (31.6%) had experienced bullying in their current workplace. Furthermore, the 2010 SSC Integrity and Conduct Survey (SSC, 2010) found that 38% of staff had witnessed abusive or intimidating behaviour toward other staff, improper use of the internet or email, or lying to other employees in the last year .

Discrimination

Respondents were also asked about whether they had experienced discrimination in their current workplace. A third (33.3%, n=2428) of PSA women indicated that they had felt discriminated against within their workplace. Gender (13.9%), employment status (13.5%), age (11.2%) and ethnicity (8.5%) were cited as the primary bases for discrimination. Marital status, religious or political beliefs, disability, pregnancy and sexual orientation were the least cited bases for discrimination.

These findings are of considerable concern because victimisation generally, including its forms such as bullying, and discrimination can have serious effects on individuals (Aquino & Thau, 2009). It can also affect organisational productivity by undermining motivation and the trust needed for innovation to take place (Ester 2008). The effects of bullying and discrimination extend beyond those most directly involved.

Figure 6.1 Bases of discrimination

Bases of discrimination

These findings contrast the patterning of formal discrimination claims in New Zealand. Of claims brought to the Employment Relations Court, disability is the most commonly cited basis of discrimination (Human Rights Commission, 2010). It is possible that discrimination based on gender, employment status, age and ethnicity is more commonly accepted as part of normal work behaviour, is under-reported and/ or is more difficult to make an employment claim on these bases.

Respondents were invited to make further comments about their experiences of bullying and discrimination to which a massive 2465 respondents responded. While this rich qualitative data requires further analysis, some indicative comments include:

- *While the Ministry has been surprisingly accommodating of my part-time working arrangements since returning from parental leave, the longer I work part-time, the more pressure I get to work more hours. My boss exhibits (verbal) bullying behaviour at times, which is experienced by many of my team members. Some have left, the remainder are uncertain how to deal with it; Discussing it with her does not seem to change things, and we have no confidence that it would be dealt with appropriately if we escalated it.*
- *When I was pregnant and very unwell during my pregnancy my current manager made me feel pressured to either take early maternity leave (which I couldn't afford to do) or hurry and return to work. When I returned after maternity leave I was not considered for a specific*

promotion when I was just as experienced as other people in the office. The response I got was that I had a young child and would be off a lot with illnesses....clearly discrimination because I was a mother with a young child.

- *If a manager is racist all the problems start from there. I have all the qualifications for the current position that I am holding and I have much more knowledge than my other colleagues which I always use to answer their questions. But my manager's view is that there is always a lack of communication. Which is bull shit, if I can answer the technical answers which is the only demand for my role, where is communication gap? This is not only happening to me, it is happening to other Indians as well.*
- *A senior manager made a resourcing decision that effectively increased my workload by 60-70% and when I queried it I was told not to complain.*
- *Arrogant and dictatorial managers not respecting my expertise; discrimination because I have been here longer than others; being older is seen to be "past use by date"*
- *A new older female manager did not like my flexible working hours, although meeting all my outputs. She had done it the hard way and had shown real commitment to the job.*
- *I was bullied because I wanted to work different hours to the standard. Even though I was a "full-time" staff member I was treated like I was part-time and for some reason that made you a lesser quality person.*
- *Because I work part-time, I was not considered a priority to be moved ahead in my career path.*

What we don't know from the current survey data is how employers seek to reduce bullying and discriminatory practices in their workplace (through policy, training, work organisation, or performance management) and how they deal with complaints of discrimination. Given the high prevalence discrimination and bullying experienced by PSA women this is likely to be an important area for future work in the PSA.

7. Constructing careers

How are PSA women planning their careers and what opportunities do they see?

This section explores the extent to which PSA women are shaping the form and progression of their careers. Drawing from the national and international research literature, we sought to explore a number of topics influencing the careers of women members of the PSA. These included their plans for future career development; their satisfaction with career stage; factors that influence career choices and; organisational support for their career development.

Key findings

- PSA Women members constitute a reasonably stable workforce. Over half hoped to stay in their organisation in their current jobs or in a higher or different position in the future. Intention to progress in one's career was significantly related to age of respondents.
- In the preceding 12 months just over half of PSA women had discussed and planned for their development and career goals with their managers.
- Nevertheless, respondents indicated that there were not clear career pathways or good prospects for career achievement in their current positions.
- Overall perceptions of career opportunities and support varied for workers in different working contexts including employment status and occupation.

Career planning

Career intentions

PSA women constitute a reasonably stable workforce. A third (33.9%) of respondents indicated that they were planning to stay in their current position for the long term and another 23.5% were intending to apply for higher or different roles within their current organisation. Only 21% of the respondents indicated they were interested in or actively pursuing career opportunities outside of their current organisation (see Table 5.1). A minority of respondents felt that they had no options to change their job even if they wanted to (8.8%).

But career intentions varied significantly between age groups. Those who were not planning to progress to higher levels or felt that they were unable to do so were on average between 5-7 years older (48.5 years of age) than those who were actively applying for jobs elsewhere (43 years of age) or

planning to do so in the future (41 years of age). This finding suggests that greater facilitation of career progression of older workers might be an important area of focus for organisations and unions - A worker of 48 years of age still has approximately 15 years of working life ahead of them before they receive superannuation.

Table 7.1: Career intentions

	n	%
I am planning to stay in my current position for the long term	2475	33.9
In the future I want to apply for a higher or different position in my organisation	1715	23.5
In the future I want to apply for a higher or different position outside of my organisation	997	13.7
I am actively applying for a higher or different position outside of my organisation now	534	7.3
I would like to change jobs but I don't believe I can	642	8.8
None/ uncertain	870	11.9
Non-response	59	0.8
Total	7292	100.0

Factors influencing career planning

The most important elements for respondents when thinking about their future career were: 1) interesting work, 2) use of their skills and knowledge and 3) job security. A good salary was rated 4th most important, while work that contributes positively to society was ranked 5th.

There were only two elements that respondents were neutral about or they rated as of little importance. These were work arrangements that accommodate interests and hobbies outside of paid work and opportunities for travel (see Table 7.2 on next page).

We were interested to find out if the importance of factors influencing career decisions varied for different kinds of workers. Perhaps unsurprisingly full-time and part-time workers varied to the extent that they rated opportunities for advancement (FT: 4.11, PT: 3.81) and opportunity for travel (FT: 2.97, PT: 2.65). These groups also varied to the extent to which they considered work-life fit important (FT: 4.18, PT: 4.48), but did not significantly vary in the importance of work that can accommodate interests and hobbies (FT: 3.80, PT: 3.84). These findings may be explained by a distinction between work /life fit and work that accommodates interests and hobbies based on notions of family and community 'responsibilities'. In this light these findings suggest that part time workers are likely to be involved in part-time work in order to accommodate family and community responsibilities rather than simply to pursue personal interests and hobbies.

It is also crucial to note that these groups had more similarities than differences. There were no significant differences in how full-time and part-time workers rated the importance of interesting work, a good social environment, and work that provides a service to others and contributes to society. Thus, the provision of opportunities for interesting and meaningful work is just as important for workers who want to work part-time as those who choose to work full-time.

Table 7.2 Factors influencing career planning decisions

	Mean*	Median
Interesting work	4.69	5
Use of your skills and knowledge	4.67	5
Job security	4.62	5
Good salary	4.53	5
Work that contributes positively to society	4.38	5
Job location	4.36	4
A job that enables you to work independently	4.31	4
Work that provides service to others	4.31	4
Training opportunities	4.26	4
Working arrangements that accommodate family and/or community commitments	4.22	4
A good social environment at work	4.08	4
Good opportunities for advancement	4.07	4
Working arrangements that accommodate interests and hobbies outside of paid work	3.81	4
Opportunities for travel	2.93	3

*On a 5-point importance scale (1=not important to 5=very important).

Career opportunities

Career development opportunities and processes

Although the majority of PSA women had discussed their career and development goals with their managers, the opportunities they saw for attaining their goals in their current roles were limited. On average, the respondents disagreed that promotion decisions were fair, that there were good prospects for career achievement in their current role, that there were clear career pathways in their organisation or even that they received adequate development opportunities for them to meet their goals.

Table 7.3 Availability of career development opportunities and processes

	Mean*	Median
Promotion decisions are made fairly and transparently in my organisation	2.60	3
My job offers me good prospects for career achievement	2.81	3
There are clearly defined career pathways in my organisation	2.84	3
I receive adequate training and development to help me towards my career goals	2.97	3
Professional development is offered to me	3.13	3
I received adequate training and development to help me towards my job	3.38	4

*On a 5-point agreement scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Some international research has indicated that part-time workers may be disadvantaged as compared to full-timers in regard the career development and promotion opportunities (Whittock, Edwards, McLaren and Robinson, 2002). Encouragingly full-time and part-time respondents did not significantly vary in their reporting of availability of career pathways, professional development, or training for their jobs and careers.

Career development support

Organisational support for career development

We asked respondents to indicate the importance of key supports in the achievement of their career goals. This question was aimed at gaining greater understanding of what aspects in women's working lives are most helpful when developing their careers. Two of the top three supports (considered moderately to very important) included support from senior people as managers and support from other mentors or coaches. On-the-job training was also rated very highly in supporting women's career goals.

Interestingly, the supports that the largest groups of PSA women ranked as 'not important' included: 1) availability of study leave, 2) opportunities for secondment, 3) career break schemes (3, 4, 5% of respondents respectively). Taken together these findings suggest that while supportive structural arrangements including leave and transfer arrangements are considered important for many PSA women's careers, more important is the

relationships and individual support women have with the people around them (senior colleagues, peers and family).

Table 7.4 Importance of career goal supports in ranked order

Rank		Mean*	Median
1.	Manager support	4.47	5
2.	On-the-job training	4.45	5
3.	Support from others	4.44	5
4.	Access to mentoring	4.23	4
5.	Availability of study leave	3.93	4
6.	Working on special projects	3.87	4
7.	Opportunities for secondment	3.76	4
8.	Availability of career break schemes	3.69	4

*Mean on a 5-point scale ranging from 1=not important to 5=Very important.

How supports were rated varied in relation to the occupational groupings of the respondents. Some of the most interesting and largest differences between occupational groups included the following:

- Importance of study leave was rated 3.68 (neutral to moderately important) by policy analysts but 4.32 (moderately to very important) by workers in social, health and education sectors. These occupational groups similarly varied in respect to the importance of having access to mentoring. Further, those working in social, health and education rated the availability of career break schemes highest of all occupational groups.
- Importance of on-the-job training was rated 4.24 policy analysts but 4.57 by contract centre workers.
- Policy analysts rated opportunities for secondment and working on special projects more highly than any other occupational group

These occupational differences begin to delineate the differences in women’s requirements for career support given divergent educational backgrounds and specific contexts. Thus, consideration of career supports made available to workers needs to be tightly linked with contextual issues.

Management support for career development

In the previous 12 months around half of the respondents had discussed and planned for their development and career goals with their managers:

- 51.0% agreed that they had discussed their career goals with their manager
- 56.7% agreed that that they were able to set their own goals for development in consultation with their manager.
- 45.2% had an agreed-upon development plan with their manager
- 52.0% agreed that they had discussed with their manager how their

training and development needs might be met in their current job.

- However, the majority of the respondents had not negotiated pay or bonuses with their manager as part of their career and development discussions (only 15.8% indicated that they had done this).

On average respondents indicated neutral to moderate agreement that they discussed their career goals, had an agreed on development plan and discussed training needs with their manager. There was slightly stronger indication that respondents set their own goals for development in consultation with manager (56% agreed that this occurred with another 20% neither agreeing nor disagreeing).

Reporting of negotiated pay was much lower with only 16% agreeing that they were involved in negotiating pay in the last 12 months. Thus, performance development plans do not appear to be linked to bonuses and pay for the majority of our respondents.

There were differences between full-time and part-time workers on all aspects of manager support for career development except in regard to negotiated pay. Full time workers indicated that they engaged in greater discussion with their manager about their career goals, how they would achieve their career goals, what training was needed, and opportunities for secondment.

8. Influencing unions

How do women members perceive their union and what priorities do they want the PSA to pursue?

In this last section we explore how PSA women feel about their union, particularly whether they saw the PSA as innovative, and whether it encouraged members to participate. This section also reports the respondents' priorities for the PSA, and their level of activity as members.

Key findings

- Ratings of PSA innovation and decentralisation were moderate, with a reasonable consistency in member responses. Respondents saw the union to be open to their participation and less so, as innovative.
- Beyond the primary issues of pay, conditions and security, the respondents prioritised the handling of grievances, equity issues, and informing members of activities for PSA activity.
- There was moderate support for other union activities such as "Getting workers a say in how they do their jobs", "Getting workers a say in how their employers run the organisation", and "Participating in public debate about how things are done in the State sector". Such activities might help raise perceptions of union innovation, but some members might take some persuading that taking up these new activities was the right thing for the union to do.

Voice in the union

Perceptions of the PSA

In order to explore how PSA women view their union we asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement with statements about the PSA regarding perceived innovation, and readiness to incorporate members' ideas (see table 8.1 on next page).

The first five questions measure the extent to which the union is perceived as innovative. Both the mean and median show moderate perceptions of the union as innovative. The median shows that as many respondents disagree, as agree, with statements that the union is innovative. The standard deviation for these questions was relatively low (ranging from 0.68-0.78). Responses clustered around the middle of the scale, indicating low divergence in responses.

The last question concerns the extent to which the PSA encourages members to participate in decision making. All results show general agreement that the union encourages participation.

Table 8.1 Perceptions of the PSA

	Mean*	Median
The union is flexible and adapts new ideas in doing union business.	3.42	3
The union is open and responsive to change on behalf of its members.	3.54	4
The union is always developing new ways of meeting the concerns of its members.	3.42	3
Suggestions for new approaches and procedures to address members' concerns seem to fall on deaf ears.	2.94	3
Decisions in this union seek to preserve the status quo.	3.08	3
Members are encouraged to participate when important decisions are made	4.00	4

*On a 5-point agreement scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 5=strongly agree).

Priorities for the PSA

In order to help the PSA understand what women members consider as important and set their future work agendas we sought comment from respondents on union priorities. Respondents were asked to indicate what else they thought should be a priority for the PSA, apart from pay, conditions and job security.

Respondents generally rated all the activities listed as priorities. However, by exploring how priorities were ranked we can begin to get a picture of what areas of PSA work are the most valued for women members (see Table 8.2 on next page).

The results show that handling grievances, telling members what the PSA is doing, and being a watchdog on equity issues are priorities, with relatively high member support. Health and safety is also important, and could be considered in parallel with results about working hours and conditions.

Giving workers a say in how they do their jobs, and how things are done in the state sector were also deemed important by respondents.

Table 8.2 Priorities for the PSA in ranked order

Rank		Mean*	Median
1	Handling members' grievances	4.29	4
2	Speaking out and being a watchdog on equity issues	4.09	4
3	Telling members what the union is doing	4.08	4
4	Improving health and safety on the job	3.88	4
5	Getting workers a say in how they do their jobs	3.82	4
6	Participating in public debate about how things are done in the State sector	3.82	4
7	Collaborating with members' professional bodies (e.g. Social Workers' Association, LIANZA etc.) to advance their professional interests	3.72	4
8	Getting workers a say in how their employers run the organisation	3.68	4
9	Giving members a say in how the union is run	3.65	4
10	Providing members with opportunities to meet with other members with similar interests	3.47	3

*On a 5-point agreement scale (1=strongly disagree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 5=strongly agree).

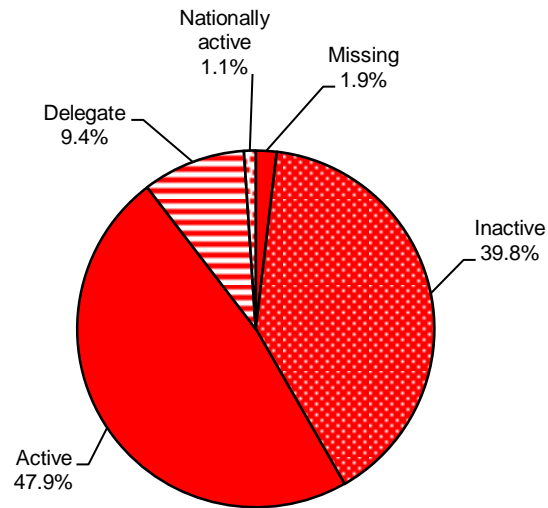
The rating of these priorities did not vary according to whether workers were full-time or part-time workers. However, variations were found between occupational groups in regard to almost all priorities (except for handling grievances which was given the highest priority by all groups). For example, policy analysts rated PSA participation in public debates about the state sector as more important than did contract, clerical and administrative workers (and 4.03 and 3.66 respectively). Social, health and education workers were more likely to prioritise the PSA engaging in collaboration with professional bodies than the IT professionals.

These modest differences suggest that there is some scope for occupational sector responses to the range of possible union roles.

Level of activity in the PSA

Respondents varied in their level of activity in the PSA. Just over half (58.4%) of the respondents identified themselves as an active member and/or as holding a more formal delegate role in the union.

Figure 8.1 Level of activity in the PSA



This finding suggests a reasonably high participation of members in their union activities. However, it is possible that survey respondents are more likely to be active than other PSA members.

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