

Sharing the Caring: Whānau and Work



SOCIETY IS CHANGING

Today's fathers want to take a more active role in caring for their children.¹ That's good news for the kids, and good news for mothers too. Women still do 75% of childcare in the home², which disproportionately affects women's career development and promotion prospects. Women are also twice as likely to be unpaid carers as men.³ As New Zealand's population ages we have a social, moral and economic imperative to share caring work more fairly between men and women.

The value of unpaid work in New Zealand is around \$70 billion, equivalent to 23% of our gross domestic product.⁴

WHAT'S CAUSING THE PROBLEM?

- ✓ Lack of access to affordable childcare (pulling and keeping women out of the workforce)
- ✓ Pressures placed on women to be the one responsible for family care
- ✓ Current legislation assumes mothers will take primary carer parental leave and provides no paid leave for partners

 Because of these factors, women adjust their careers for family to a greater extent than men, particularly when it comes to parenting.

THE BENEFITS

There are many potential benefits to sharing unpaid work more equitably between men and women:



Dads can be dads: Working dads, as well as mums, want and should have the opportunity to spend quality time with their children.



A wider pool of talent: By enabling a more diverse group of people to access interesting, rewarding careers, we benefit from the diversity of thought, skills and experience they bring.



Women's careers take off: When women's health and time available to work aren't disproportionately affected by caring, there is a positive impact on their career development and promotion prospects, and they are able to access more financially rewarding careers.⁵



A better sex life: Couples who distribute chores equally have sex 36% more often on average than in households where one partner does the bulk of the routine housework.⁶



WHY URGENT CHANGE IS NEEDED

Our parents will live longer⁷...



2036

1,258,500 million New Zealanders will be aged 65-plus



77%

increase in over 65's from 2016 to 2036



2026

the number of older Māori needing care on a more than daily basis could increase by more than 200 percent.



74%

Among the non-Maori population, the number needing long-term care is estimated to increase by 74 percent.



170k

More than 170,000 Kiwis will be living with dementia by 2050⁹



6 WAYS TO CREATE CHANGE

- ✓ **Policy and practice** – Ensure that men as well as women are encouraged to use flexible working policies, empowering men to participate fully in parenting too.
- ✓ **Walk the talk** – Leaders, head off loudly when you leave the office to watch your child play sport; it tells your team it's fine for them to do it too.
- ✓ **Talk to your team** – Your people have diverse perspectives, so benefit from the richness of their experience by bringing them into the conversation about balancing work and care.
- ✓ **Ask your children what they want** – you can't be everywhere at once, but you can balance your work and home commitments. Check in with your kids about the things they really want you there for.
- ✓ **When scheduling events** or development opportunities, consider the times that would work best for people with family or community commitments; that might not be in the evenings or during the school holidays, for example.
- ✓ **Default carer** – New Zealand's parental leave policy makes the mother the default carer. It is time we challenge this deeply-held attitude and allow and encourage dads to bond with and play a full role in their children's lives.

“Women don't just wake up one day and say ‘I will opt out today’.”

MELISSA LANGSAM BRAUNSTEIN

FLEXIBILITY IS KEY

- ✓ Caring for family members – children or parents - is the main reason that Generation X want flexible working.
- ✓ With people living longer, 'retirement' is becoming less defined; more of the older generation still actively employed although they may have less desire for full-time work.
- ✓ Millennials want access to flexible working for more personal pursuits including community work and care.
- ✓ As house prices increase so has the distance to places of work. The ability to work from another location or stagger hours to avoid peak traffic gives employees hours back in their day.

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AROUND THE WORLD



OECD

- Across OECD countries, more than one in ten adults aged over 50 provides informal help with personal care to an elderly, sick or disabled person.¹⁰

Carers

- Close to two-thirds of such carers are women, typically caring for close relatives such as their parents or spouse.¹¹

Unpaid Care

- The difference in weeks per year on average spent by women compared to men on unpaid care

4.5 Australia

6 Ireland

10.2 Mexico

3.9 New Zealand

0.8 Sweden

Sources

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- 3 Harvard Business Review: Off-Ramps and On-Ramps: Keeping Talented Women on the Road to Success, 2005
- 4 Stats NZ: Time use survey: 2009/10, 2011
- 5 World Bank. 2012. World Development Report 2012 : Gender Equality and Development.
- 6 NZ Herald: How household chores could lead to better sex, 2016
- 7 Ministry of Social Development: Our ageing population
- 8 Te Puāwaitanga O Ngā Tapuwāe Kia Ora Tonu: Life and Living in Advanced Age, a Cohort Study in New Zealand
- 9 Alzheimer's New Zealand: The impact of Dementia in NZ
- 10 Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development - OECD, 2011
- 11 ODI: Women's work - Mothers, children and the global childcare crisis, 2015 (p18)