



Police Federation  
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# Flexible working arrangements for police in Australia and New Zealand

Summary report • November 2017

UCoDA Report







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Celebrating 20 years as  
The National Voice of Policing

# Flexible working arrangements for police in Australia and New Zealand

## Summary report

Results of a survey of Australian and New Zealand police officers

Mark Cole & Christine Sanderson

UCoDA

November 2017

ISBN-13:978-0-6481885-0-6

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# Foreword



The Police Federation of Australia recently commissioned the biggest member survey in its history to gain important feedback about flexible working arrangements.

The survey had an exceptional response rate.

The results show many Australian police officers seek more support for flexible working arrangements. Ensuring they receive this support is a priority for the PFA.

The survey results also challenge pre-conceived ideas about flexible working arrangements. It is not only junior-rank officers with young families who wish to access them. Senior officers might also need them as they transition towards retirement.

And it is not only the employee who experiences the benefits of the arrangements. Managers and supervisors at all levels of policing can use them smartly and cost-effectively to co-ordinate their rosters around the demands of the job.

I'd like to thank all members across Australia and our associates in New Zealand for their participation in the survey and their overall support of the PFA.

**Mark Carroll**  
President  
Police Federation of Australia

# About this report

This report summarises findings of an online survey of Australian and New Zealand police conducted by the Police Federation of Australia in November and December 2016. Members of all Australian state, territory and federal forces participated.

## Research objectives

The aim of the survey was to generate a detailed picture of police working patterns and workplace issues, with special reference to work-life balance and flexible working arrangements (FWAs). The main research objectives were to gain a better understanding of:

- Police working patterns and issues around work-life balance;
- The extent and profiles of FWAs as they operate on the ground in various work settings;
- The effectiveness and benefits of FWAs;
- Attitudes to FWAs;
- Negative impacts and barriers to the implementation of FWAs;
- The future role of FWAs.

## The survey

The 90 question survey was completed by 11,418 police officers - 16.5% of the combined police forces at the time of the survey. Public Safety Officers and Community Police were included in the survey. Response rates of higher than 10 percent were recorded by all genders and non-commissioned ranks in all jurisdictions except in Queensland and the Northern Territory.

Responses were stratified post-survey by gender, rank and jurisdiction, and results weighted accordingly. Responses were then reweighted to adjust for a slight skew in the sample towards those who were employed on FWAs. This skew was quantified by comparing estimates of the number of part-time police (by jurisdiction and gender) based on the weighted survey responses with the actual numbers of part-time police. The results are presented as estimates of total police populations in each jurisdiction.

The survey has generated a comprehensive and unique dataset on police working arrangements which will serve the Police Federation of Australia and its branches into the future.

The survey also offered opportunities for police officers to comment freely on a number of topics, and many thousands of detailed comments and submissions were received and analysed. The full report contains the detailed qualitative data and includes many quotes and extracts from these responses.

Note: whenever the phrase "all police" is used in the report without qualification, it refers to all Australian and New Zealand police.



## What are flexible working arrangements?

For many years employers and the public have heard anecdotal reports that employees who are given opportunities to work more flexibly are more dedicated and productive employees, and are better able to manage their lives outside of work. This is no different in policing.

The Australian Public Service Commission quotes Barbara Pocock's definition of work-life balance as:

*People having a measure of control over when, where and how they work. It is achieved when an individual's right to a fulfilled life inside and outside paid work is accepted and respected as the norm to the mutual benefit of the individual, business and society.<sup>1</sup>*

The Fair Work Ombudsman states that:

*Flexibility in the workplace allows employers and employees to make arrangements about working conditions that suit them. This helps employees maintain a work/life balance and can help employers improve the productivity and efficiency of their business.<sup>2</sup>*

The need for employees to have mechanisms to balance competing demands has been expressed in many industrial acts across the country. Flexible working arrangements (FWAs) have been developed to assist police officers who are unable to work regular full-time rosters. Defining the specifics of FWAs can be challenging simply because the arrangements are so varied. Examples of FWAs can be any one of a spectrum of work structures that alters the time and/or place that work gets done on a regular basis, and includes:

- Hours of work (for example changes to start and finish times);
- Patterns of work (for example split shifts or job sharing);
- Locations of work (for example working from home).

<sup>1</sup> B. Pocock, 'Work-Life 'Balance' in Australia: Limited progress, dim prospects', *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, (2005), vol. 43, no.2 pp. 198-209, p.201.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/employee-entitlements/flexibility-in-the-workplace/flexible-working-arrangements>

## Acknowledgements

The survey is the initiative of the Women's Advisory Committee of the PFA and the PFA National Executive.

UCoDA was engaged to finalise the survey design, manage all aspects of the on-line survey from design to implementation, and to collate data and analyse results.

All branches of the PFA contributed by promoting the survey to their members. UCoDA received ongoing expert assistance from PFA staff in the Canberra office. Special acknowledgement and thanks is due to Kathleen Potts, PFA Project Officer. Kathleen has worked closely with UCoDA throughout the project and made a significant contribution to the shaping and editing of the report.

# Key findings

## Work-life balance and workplace issues in policing

Police officers who responded to this survey report moderate levels of satisfaction with their jobs and high levels of satisfaction with their relationships with their close colleagues. In general, they accept shift work as a necessary aspect of the 24/7 police role, however many workplace issues are identified as being major contributors to workplace stress.

The most frequently identified factor in workplace stress, by nearly 50 percent of police, is lack of support from management. Workload and resourcing issues are rated as significant factors by about 40 percent of police.

Police officers experience very high levels of interference in their personal life because of their work, with moderate to major interference reported by nearly 70 percent in Australia, and 60 percent in New Zealand. These issues are identified most consistently by officers aged between 30-39 years, suggesting peak levels of concern in the childraising years.

Further concerns relate to the management of shift work and rosters, with unpredictable rosters being particularly stressful. Unpredictability is worsened by high rates of absenteeism, with more than a third of respondents reporting that they have had at least one day off in the preceding month, either due to illness or stress. When leave is taken for any reason, or if part-time staff are rostered on as part of the team, they are frequently not backfilled. This worsens roster instability and increases workload pressures. The survey data demonstrates that unplanned overtime, long hours, being on call, night shifts, and fatigue with inadequate recovery time, can have extremely significant impacts on the physical and mental well being of police officers, as well as affecting family and social life.

## Flexible working arrangements

The number of police working under flexible working arrangements (FWAs) in Australia and flexible employment opportunities (FEO) in New Zealand is estimated to be now over 6,000. Of these 5,500 are in Australia, and they make up around 9 percent of the total police workforce with more than 85 percent of these individuals working part-time. Those working part-time in Australia make up 8 percent of the total police workforce.

FWAs are more common at the rank of constable (85 percent of all FWAs). The majority of those on FWAs are aged between 30-49 years (87 percent). Police officers in general duties are under-represented on FWAs whilst officers working in crime and investigations, or specialist operations and support services are over-represented.

Currently 80 percent of those on FWAs are women with the majority of requests made by women for parenting reasons and other carer responsibilities. Over half of all the FWA requests from men are also for parenting reasons but male requests for FWAs are more diverse and include transition to retirement and work stress.

## Benefits of FWAs

The benefits of FWAs are very significant and access to them is greatly appreciated. Evidence from this survey strongly supports this and suggests that FWAs can mitigate many of the work stress factors affecting police officers. Almost all measures of job satisfaction collected show better outcomes for those working FWAs than for regular full-timers. Qualitative data strongly suggests that FWAs allow retention of staff who would otherwise leave the police force, and that for many respondents their commitment to a policing career is increased as a result.

## Attitudes toward FWAs

Qualitative data reveals that around two thirds of respondents who currently work regular full-time rosters are in favour of FWAs, although there are significant concerns about their implementation and impact. Overall, police do not believe that FWAs will negatively affect public safety or productivity and a clear majority believe that FWAs positively affect policing outcomes because of improved job satisfaction.

## Negative impacts for those working on FWAs

Despite the general acceptance of FWAs overall, there are still many issues for police officers working FWAs. There are significant issues related to bullying and victimisation of those working FWAs, with at least a third of officers on FWAs in Australia reporting having experienced victimisation or bullying.

There is also a high level of agreement that career opportunities for officers on FWAs are negatively affected. Just over half of all Australian police on FWAs think their access to training opportunities has been reduced because of their FWA. Further, 63 percent of Australian police on an FWA believe they have reduced access to promotional opportunities due to working an FWA.

## Issues in implementing flexible working arrangements

The most significant concern expressed by police working regular full-time rosters about the impact of FWAs relate to equity in the rostering of anti-social shifts. Those working on FWAs may be unable to work specific shifts, increasing workloads when FWA positions have reduced hours that are not backfilled. Resourcing issues and poor rostering practices exacerbate these concerns about the impact of FWAs in the workplace, and confirm perceptions of inadequate support from management. These problems are most significant in the areas of general duties and traffic, which already report more problems with job satisfaction and higher levels of workplace stress than other areas.

Other concerns relate to inconsistent management practices which may vary greatly between commands and come down to the personal views of specific managers. Rostering and supervision of officers working on FWAs presents significant challenges to some managers, and data suggests that difficulties occur when managers lack the skills, support or commitment to constructively resolve these issues.

A minority of respondents have deeply held views about the nature of policing which conflict with the concept of FWAs. These officers do not support the principle of part-time police, and have concerns about the effect of FWAs on the police force. Other commonly held concerns relate to the perceived abuse of FWAs by some officers.

The alternative perspective, which is more frequently reported, is that FWAs are an essential requirement for any modern organisation, and should be adequately resourced and available to all staff as needed for a range of different circumstances – which is not the case at present. Constructive strategies to solve rostering and resourcing issues are proposed by many within the qualitative data. Recognition that there needs to be better management and use of staff on FWAs is the common element amongst many of these responses.

## Childcare and the demand for flexible working arrangements

Childcare responsibilities are a major reason for the requirement for FWAs. Severe difficulties in being able to access affordable and appropriate childcare limits the workplace participation of parents, currently predominantly women. Survey data demonstrates clearly many issues for parents managing childcare whilst in the police workforce:

- There is inflexibility in paid childcare and a mismatch in the times of availability of care compared with police rosters;
- The cost of childcare which can cover extended hours, or of home based options such as

nannies, is prohibitive and the impact of extended time in care for children is a concern for many parents;

- The needs of school age children change, but do not decrease;
- Officers in regional areas may have limited options for care and limited family support;
- Single and divorced parents can experience particularly high levels of stress as they try to negotiate their caring roles within their workplaces.

Of those currently on FWAs for parenting, 42 percent would consider returning to regular full-time work if appropriate and affordable 24/7 childcare was available. Qualitative data demonstrates an evolving pattern amongst police couples of planning their childcare and future careers together, so that for many couples both men and women anticipate using FWAs to share the responsibilities of caring for their children.

Parenting responsibilities is the most significant family and health related factor causing officers to consider leaving policing over the next decade. This is a major factor for more than 1 in 6 police officers who are currently thinking about leaving - the equivalent of 8 percent of all serving Australian and New Zealand officers. There is a strong linkage between officers considering leaving police work because of parenting or other caring responsibilities and the lack of flexible work.

### Changing profile of flexible working arrangements and their future implications

Many officers plan regarding their future need for FWAs, choosing a career path that is more likely to be adaptable for flexibility. This has major implications for areas like general duties and traffic where FWAs are not as easy to incorporate, and which are therefore likely to find it more difficult to recruit and retain staff in the future unless this issue is addressed.

Whilst to date FWAs are largely related to the needs of women, and for parenting and carer responsibilities, major changes are currently under way. Requests by men for FWAs are likely to increase significantly. Currently an estimated 1150 males are on FWAs, but survey results suggest that as many as 4750 men could request FWAs over the next five years. This would represent a rapid growth in the number of male police seeking to use FWAs.

Expectations of being involved in parenting are increasingly shared by both parents, and as women's workforce participation increases so their partners also require flexibility in their working arrangements for parenting and household responsibilities to be maintained. Many male police clearly express this expectation. This phenomenon will likely greatly increase the complexity of rostering both for the officers themselves and their managers.

The belief that FWAs should accommodate the needs of officers with physical, mental or stress-related concerns is frequently expressed by respondents. The opportunity to use FWAs to create a clear transition to retirement for older police officers is strongly endorsed by many, who express concerns about their career longevity in the context of current policing arrangements. Older police often want some respite from the pressure of shift work, long working hours, and the physical rigours of frontline roles, after having done this kind of work for many years. Transition to retirement using FWAs is a strategy for them to achieve this. Retaining experienced officers within the force, and recognising their changing needs after many years of service, are regarded as consistent with the "police family" culture which police officers value so highly.

Transition to retirement is an uncommon reason for FWA requests at present. Less than 2 percent of the total number of current FWAs are for this reason and most of these are for males over 50. However around 13 percent of future requests for FWAs are likely to relate to transition to retirement. Over the next decade more than 800 requests for transition to retirement FWAs are projected from male police officers currently over 50 years of age, with very few requests likely to come from women.

### Conclusion

The overall implication of this study is that FWAs are increasingly expected and needed by more police officers and that the issues in making them work need to be proactively, constructively and consistently addressed across the whole police force. Failure to do so will lead to the loss of many highly trained police personnel and the degradation of police workplaces through stress and failure to meet the basic needs of staff.

# Part A

## Patterns of work



# 1 Arrangement of working hours

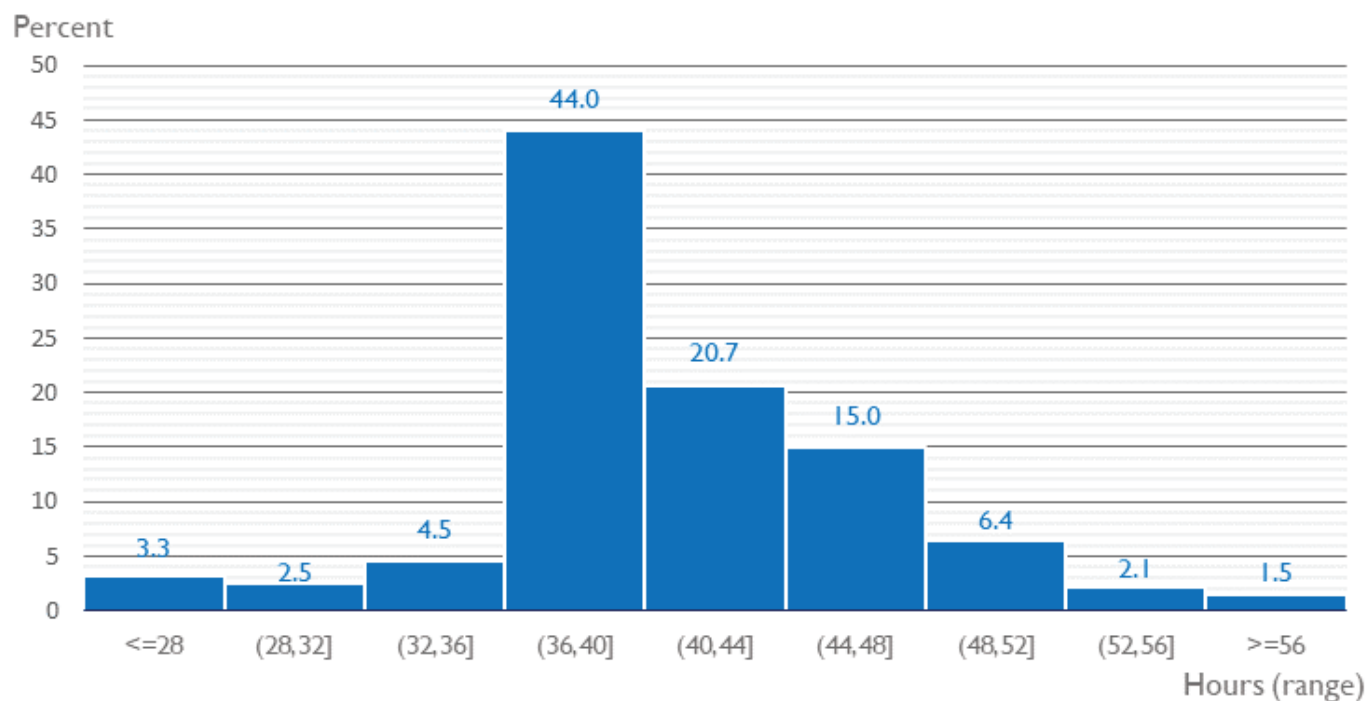
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*Police were asked how many hours they had worked including overtime over the previous fortnight.*

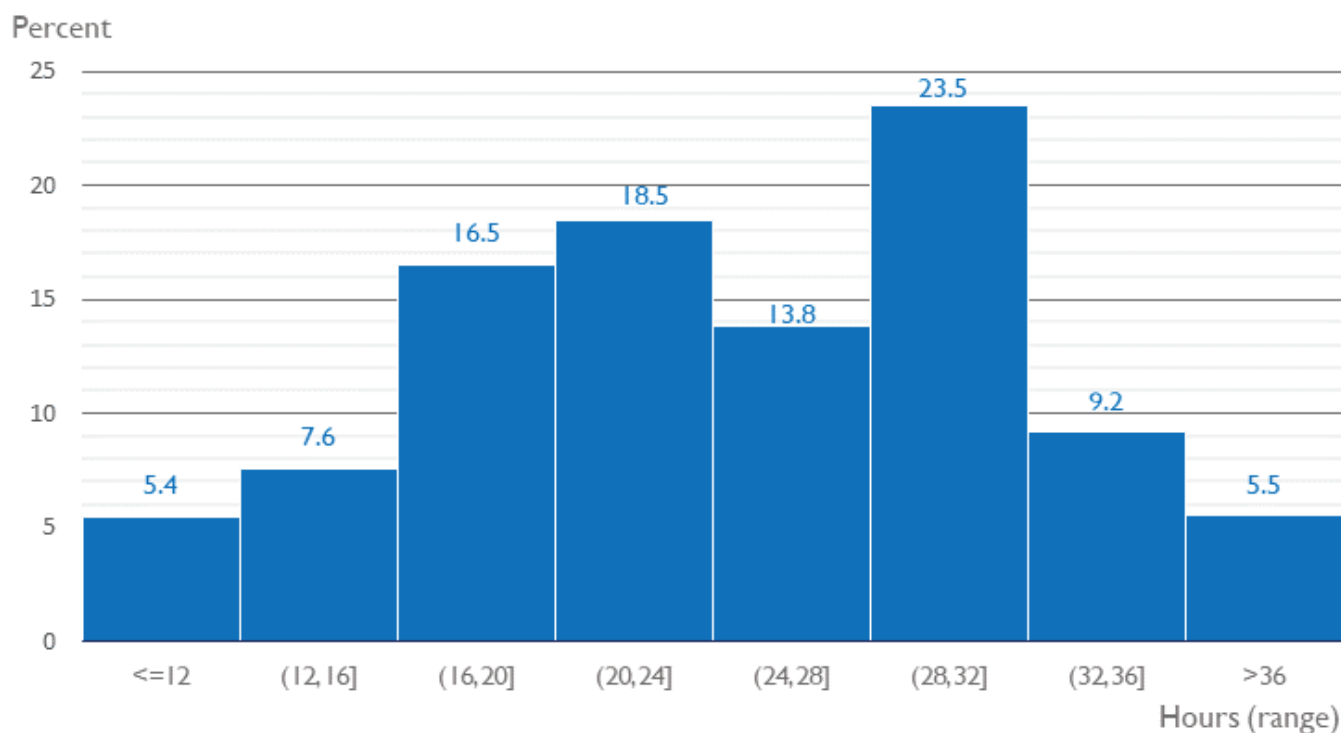
The average weekly hours worked for full-time police (defined as those ordinarily working 35 hours or more per week) in Australia was 41.2 hours (42.8 hours for those performing overtime). For Australian part-time police the average weekly hours worked were 25.5 hours (28.6 hours for those performing overtime).

The following histograms depicting the distribution of average weekly hours for full-time and part-time police in Australia and New Zealand show that over one quarter of all full-time police worked 44 hours a week or more in the fortnight leading up to the survey and one quarter of all police working part-time worked between 28 and 32 hours per week on average in the fortnight leading up to the survey. Another 15 percent of part-time police worked more than 32 hours per week.

**Chart 1.1 Distribution (%) of average weekly hours (including overtime) worked during the fortnight previous to the survey by full-time police in Australia & New Zealand.**



**Chart 1.2 Distribution (%) average weekly hours (including overtime) worked during the fortnight previous to the survey by part-time police in Australia & New Zealand.**



## 2 Shift rosters

---

*Police were asked a series of closed questions about working patterns and were also asked to describe their roster or weekly hours arrangement in an open text response.*

Five broad types of rosters were identified:

- **Rotating shift roster.**

Of all Australian and New Zealand police, 53 percent work a rotating shift roster. In this arrangement police will rotate through different shift types (for example early, day, afternoon or night, weekend shifts) within a single roster cycle.

- **Fixed shift roster.**

Of all Australian and New Zealand police 10 percent work fixed shift rosters. In this arrangement, police generally work the same shift throughout the roster cycle and will therefore have more consistency in their out of work hours.

- **Irregular, mixed or on demand roster.**

This arrangement is less common – less than 5 percent of police work this kind of roster. There is little predictability in working hours in this arrangement, as rostered time can change at short notice and in accordance with immediate work demands and priorities. From roster to roster, as well as within a single roster period, arrangements can vary widely.

- **Normal Monday to Friday office hours (full-time).**

Just under 30 percent of all police work this arrangement. Some police working this pattern may also work occasional weekends or late/evening shifts.

- **Part-time Monday to Friday office hours.**

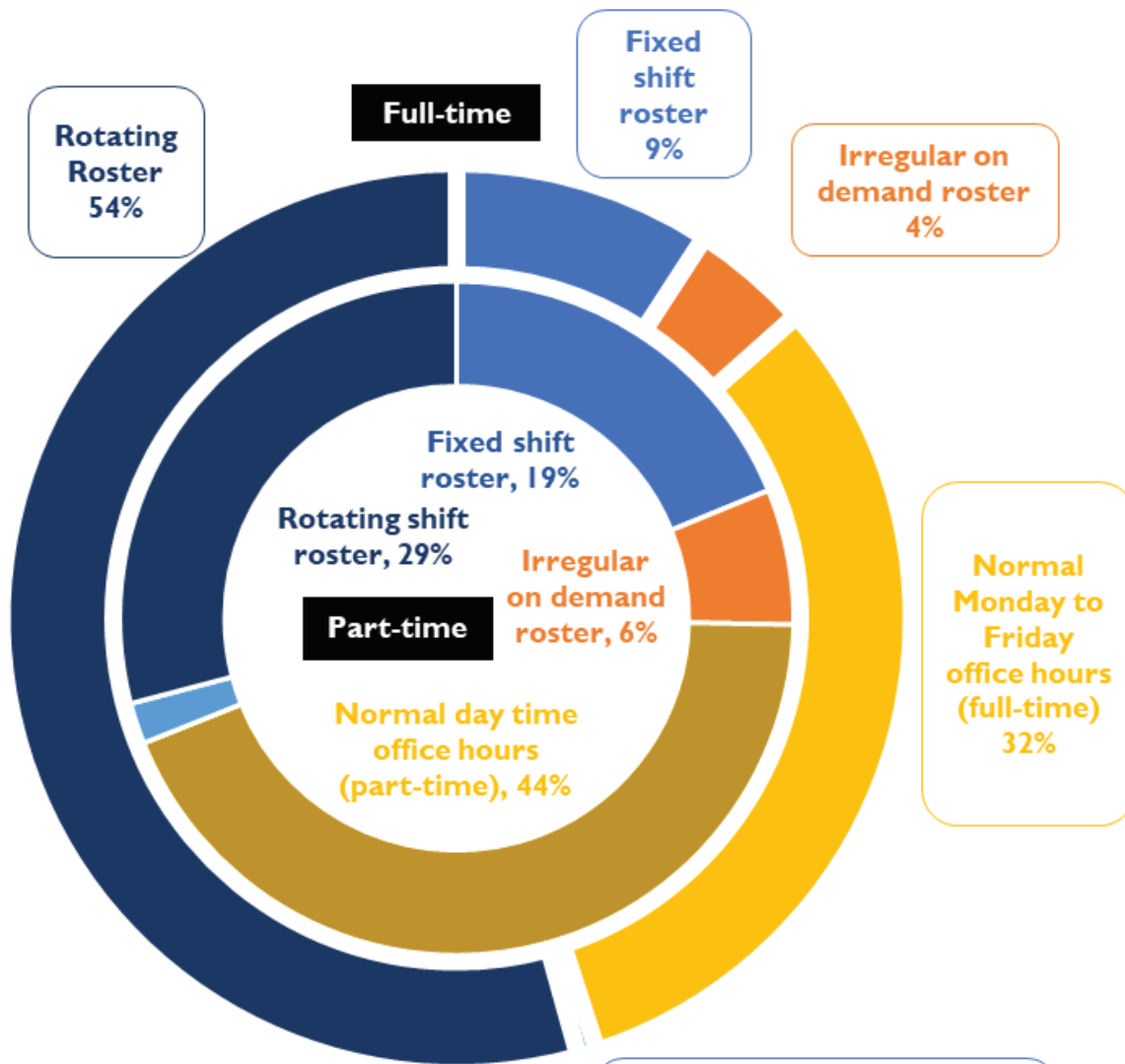
Just 3 percent of all police work this type of arrangement.

The mix of roster types worked by part-time police contrasts markedly with full-time police. Among part-time officers, there are significantly greater proportions of fixed shift rosters (29 percent of part-time police compared with 10 percent of full-time officers) and normal weekly office hour arrangements (44 percent among part-timers versus 32 percent among full-timers). Just under 30 percent of part-time officers work rotating shift rosters.

Rotating shifts predominate in traffic and general policing, where 70 percent or more police work this kind of roster. In crime investigations and intelligence and other specialist and support operations, normal weekly full-time office hours account for more than 40 percent of work arrangements, and rotating shifts account for another 30 percent. Fully 75 percent of all police in command, control and corporate services work full-time normal weekly office hours.



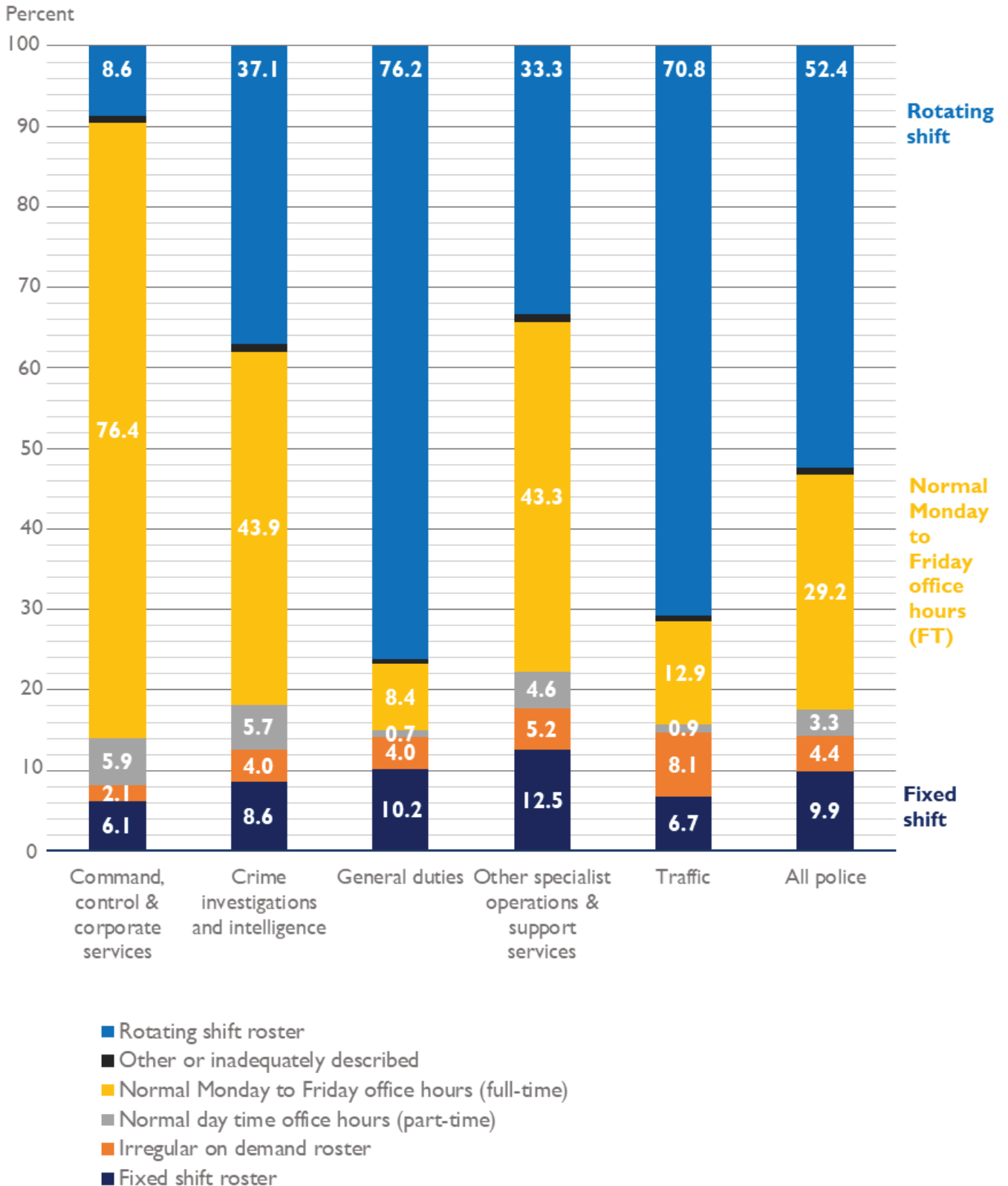
Chart 2.1 Distribution (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand by roster type and full-time status.



- Fixed shift roster
- Irregular on demand roster
- Normal day time office hours (part-time)
- Normal Monday to Friday office hours (full-time)
- Other or inadequately described
- Rotating shift roster



**Chart 2.2 Distribution (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand by roster type and type of duty.**

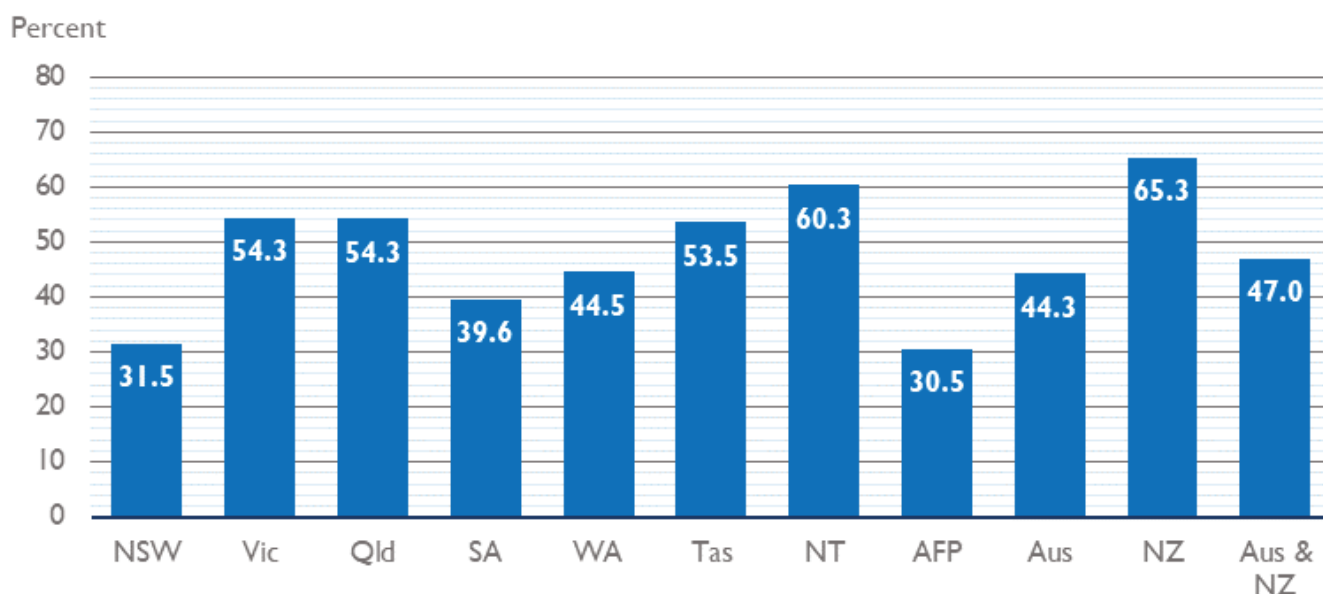


# 3 Overtime

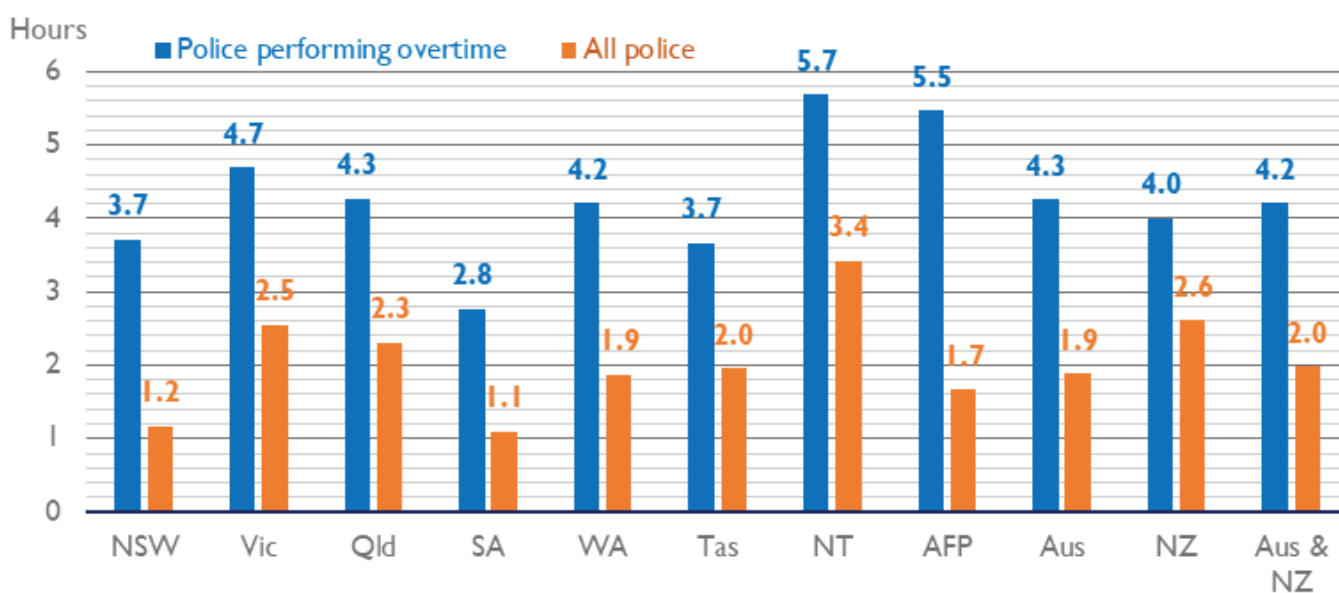
Police were asked how many overtime hours (paid or unpaid) they worked during the previous fortnight.

Of all Australian police, 44.3 percent reported working overtime compared to 65.3 percent of all New Zealand police.

**Chart 3.1 Proportion (%) of police performing overtime in the previous fortnight, by jurisdiction.**



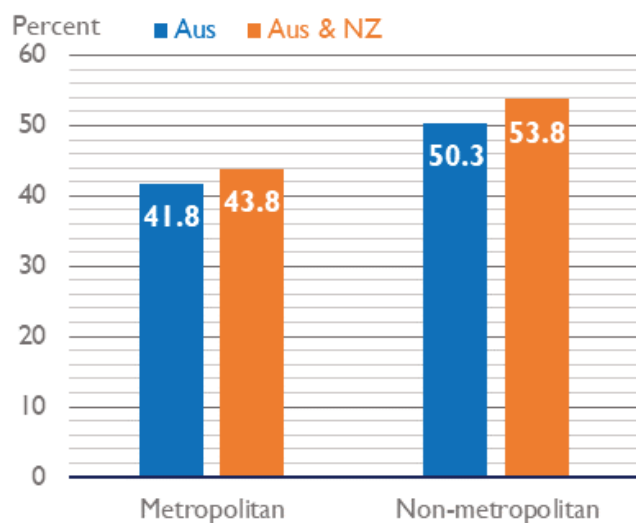
**Chart 3.2 Average weekly overtime (hours) by jurisdiction.**



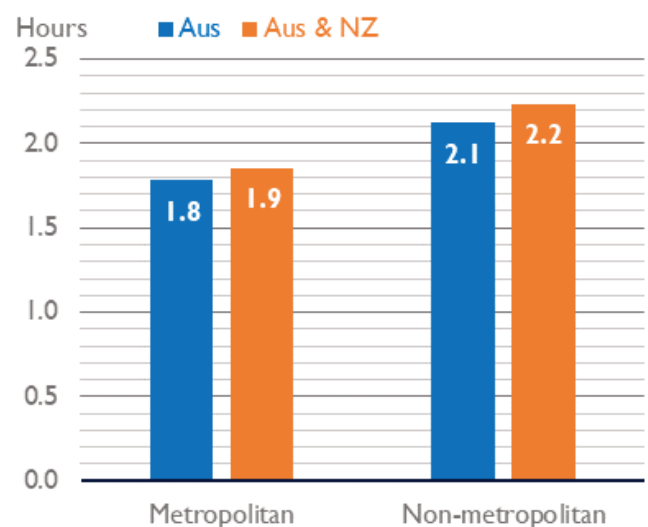
The proportion (%) of police reporting overtime varied across jurisdictions, duty type and locality. A higher proportion of police in non-metropolitan localities worked overtime (54 percent versus 44 percent) and on average non-metropolitan police worked slightly longer (2.2 versus 1.9 hours) overtime.

Police in traffic duties show the highest rates of overtime – well over half of all traffic police worked overtime in the fortnight leading up to the survey. Around half of all police in general policing reported working overtime.

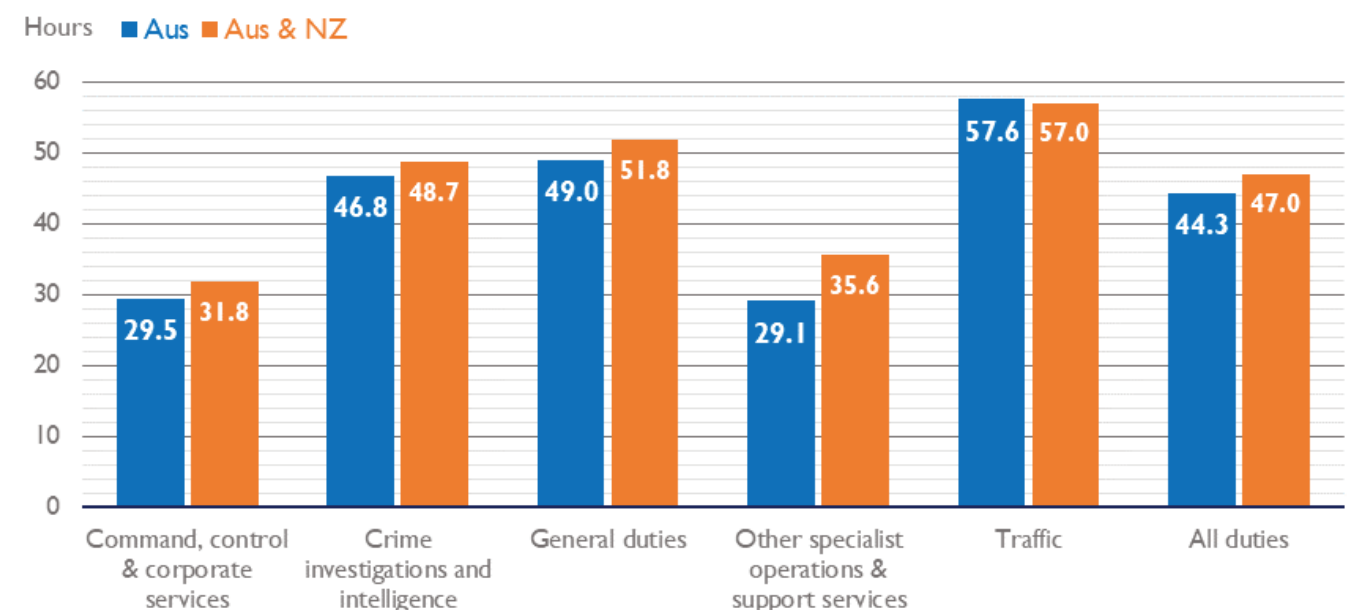
**Chart 3.3 Proportion (%) of police performing overtime in the previous fortnight by locality type for (a) Australia and, (b) Australia & New Zealand.**



**Chart 3.4 Average weekly overtime (hours) in the previous fortnight by locality type for (a) Australia and, (b) Australia & New Zealand.**



**Chart 3.5 Proportion (%) of police performing overtime in the previous fortnight by duty type for (a) Australia and, (b) Australia & New Zealand.**

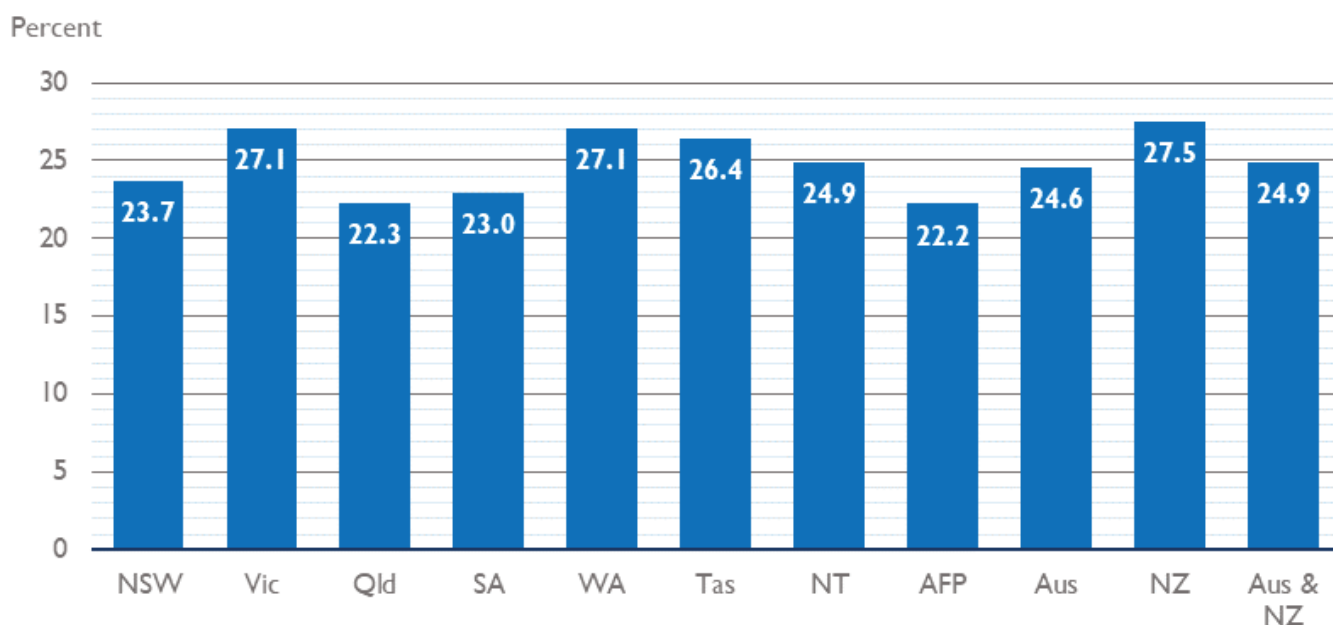


# 4 Weekends and public holidays

*Police officers working rosters were asked details of days worked in their last roster period including weekends and public holidays*

Around 25 percent of all shifts worked by police on shift rosters were on public holidays or weekends.

**Chart 4.1 Average proportion (%) of shifts worked by police (excluding police working normal weekly office hours) on a weekend or public holiday in the last roster period, by jurisdiction.**



## 5 Time off work

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*Police were asked about time off taken in the preceding month, and whether that time off was due to illness, injury or stress.*

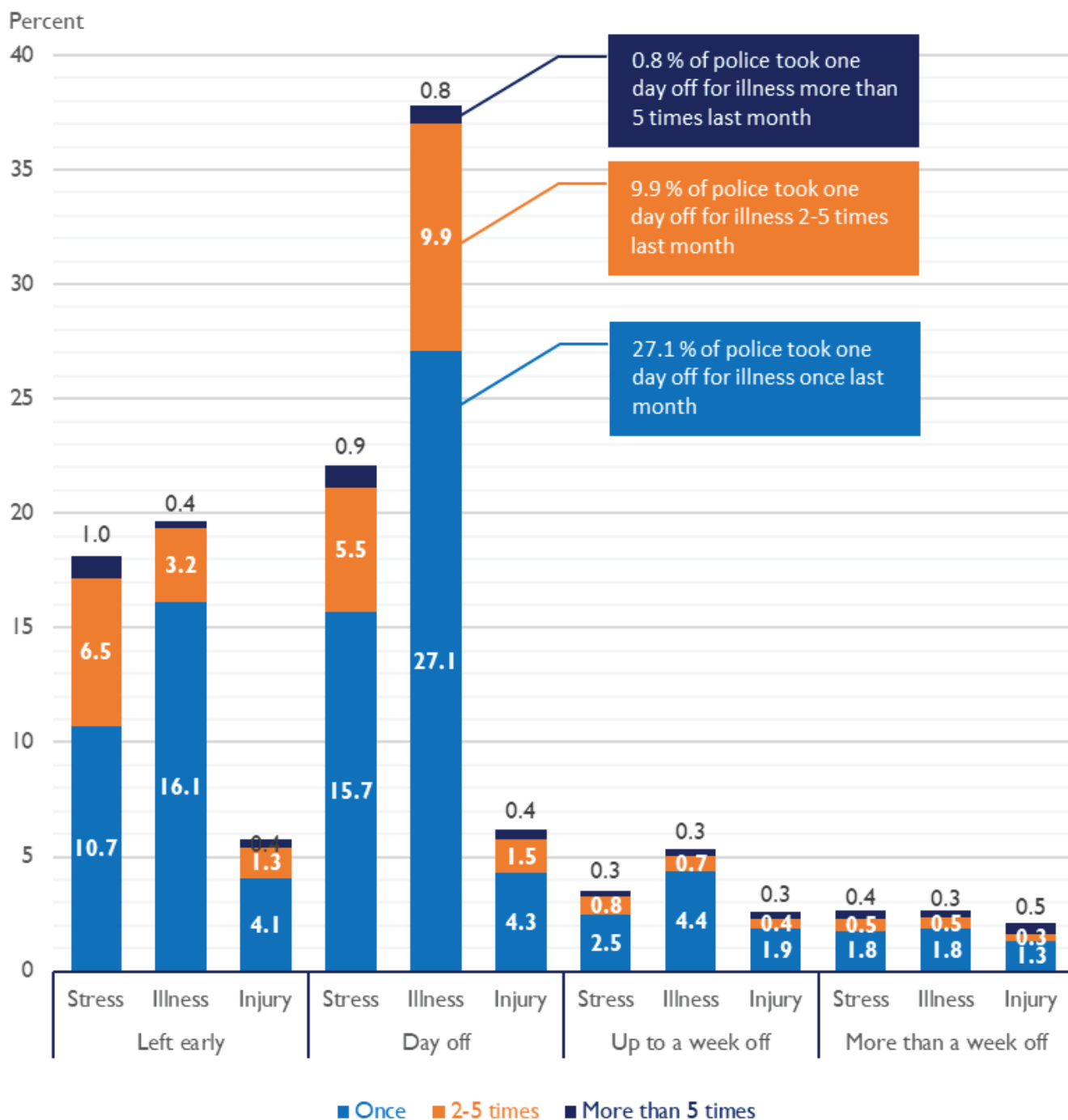
Data for those on FWAs was compared to aggregated data for all police. There were few differences in the proportions of police on FWAs taking time off for illness and all police taking time off for illness. However, a significantly smaller percentage of police on FWAs took time off for both injury and stress, compared with the percentage of the total police population taking time off.

Rates of absenteeism in general were very high - more than a third of police had at least a day off due to illness in the preceding month, and over a fifth had at least a day off due to stress. These patterns support comments made by many police about high levels of sick leave and stress leave and the negative impact this has on rostering generally.

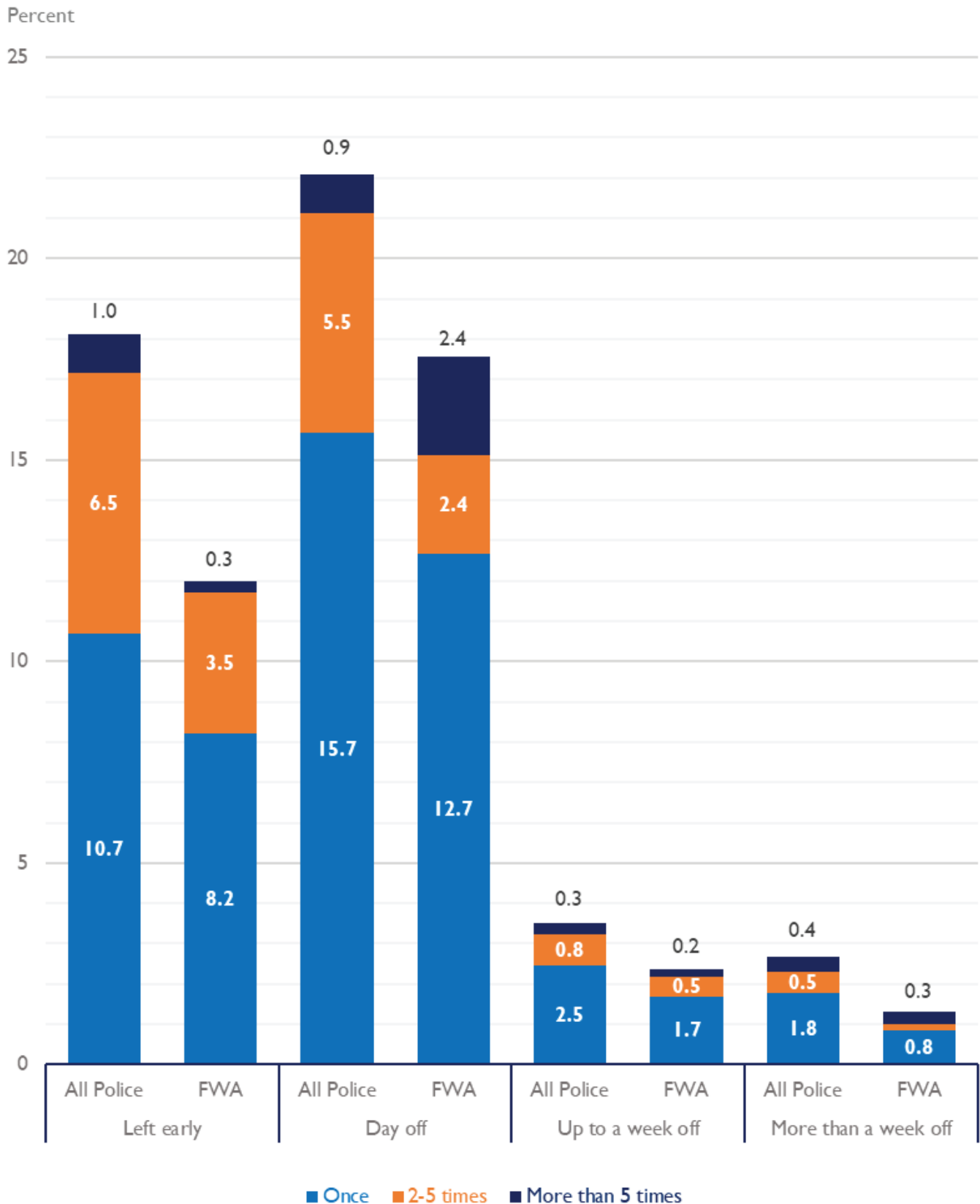
The results are consistent with a minimum of around 10 days off a year per officer on stress leave - about three times the national average.

The generally lower rates of time off for stress for those on FWAs is an important finding. Factors that may possibly contribute are: the overall younger age of those working FWAs, the fact that their rosters allow them more down time to recover from work stress, and the duty types which are undertaken by those on FWAs. Further research is needed to clarify this result, and to investigate linkages between roster and duty types and stress.

**Chart 5.1 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand taking time off during the previous month for stress, illness or injury, by frequency and length of absence.**



**Chart 5.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand taking time off during the previous month for stress, by frequency and length of absence: comparing all police with police on FWAs.**





# Part B

## Issues in police workplaces



**Police officers who responded to this survey report moderate levels of satisfaction with their jobs and high levels of satisfaction with their relationships with close colleagues. In general, they accept shift work as a necessary aspect of the 24/7 police role, however many workplace issues were identified as being major contributors to workplace stress. The flip-side is that a significant minority, around one in every four police officers, rate dissatisfaction with their current job as a major reason that they are considering leaving the police at some time during the next decade.**

## 6 Workplace stress factors

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*Police were asked to rate the contribution of different factors to their own experience of work-related stress on a four-point scale. Factors that were rated as contributing “to a significant extent” or “a great extent” are combined and analysed, and the responses of those on FWAs are compared with the result for all police. The factors for rating were:*

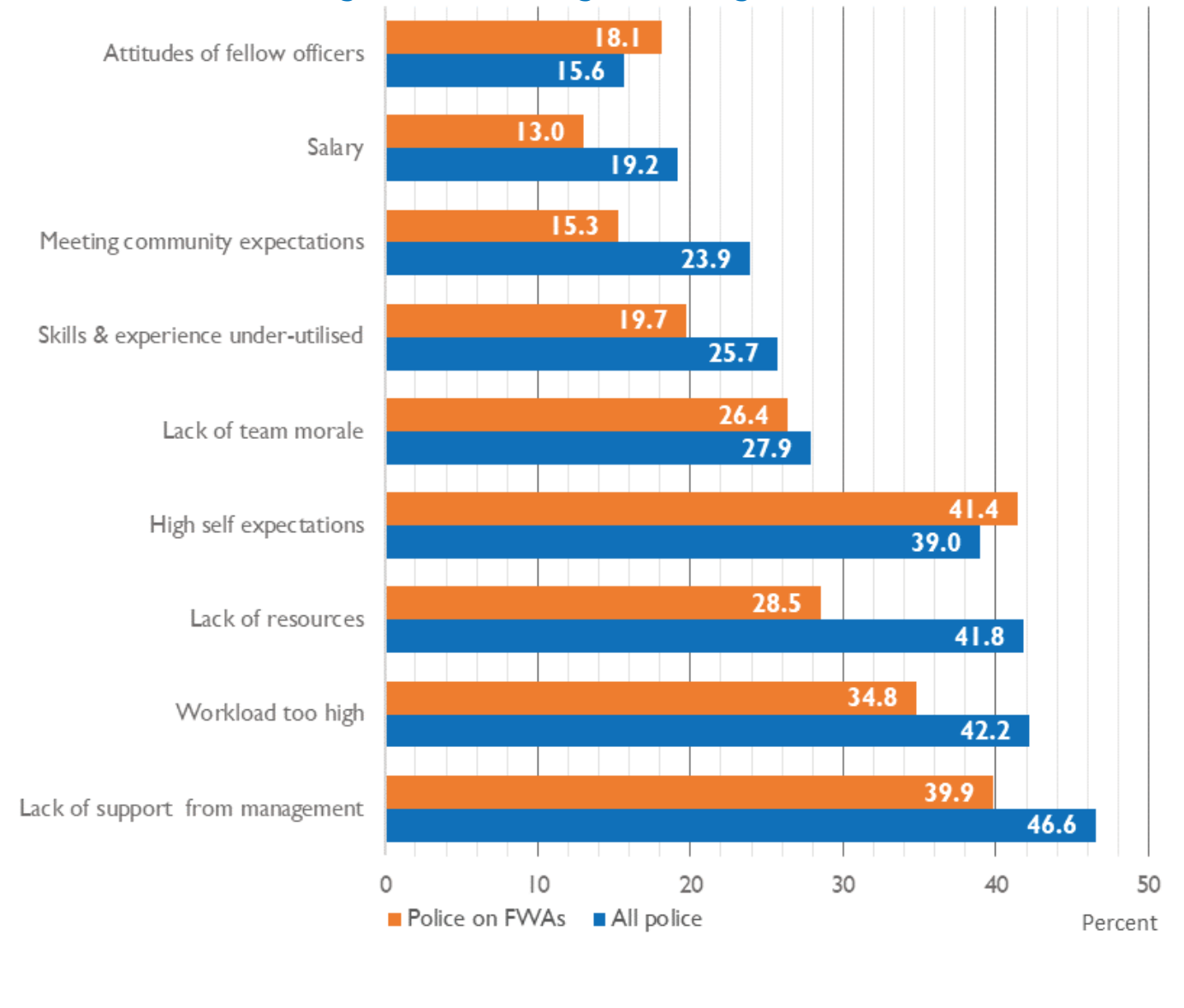
- Lack of support from management;
- Workload too high;
- Lack of resources;
- High self-expectations;
- Lack of team morale;
- Skills and experience under-utilised;
- Meeting community expectations;
- Salary;
- Attitudes of fellow officers.

The most frequently identified factor in workplace stress, by nearly 50 percent of police, is lack of support from management. Workload and resourcing issues are rated as significant factors by about 40 percent of police.

Across the board, those on FWAs rate these factors as less important than other police, which suggests that being on a FWA can mitigate many elements of work-related stress.

Only two factors were identified as being more significant by those on FWAs than by all police. High self-expectations are the most frequently identified factor by those working FWAs. Based on themes from the qualitative data, we suggest that this pattern may relate to the fact that those on FWAs feel they need to try harder, perform better, and achieve more in their role than other officers. Other officers also experience high self-expectations as stressful, to a significant degree, but it is not the main factor they identify. Attitudes of fellow officers makes the least contribution to stress for all police officers, at 15 percent, but for those on FWAs it is slightly more important.

**Chart 6.1 Work stress factors. Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand rating each factor as contributing to stress to a "significant or great extent".**



## 7 Work-life balance

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*Police working shift rosters were asked to what extent their current work roster interferes with important aspects of life outside work. They were asked to select one of four options:*

- No or insignificant interference;
- Minor interference;
- Moderate interference;
- Major interference.

Police officers experience very high levels of interference in their personal life because of their work, with moderate to major interference reported by nearly 70 percent in Australia, and 60 percent in New Zealand. These rates are unaffected by gender, duty type, rank or locality. However, these issues are identified most consistently by officers aged between 30 - 39, suggesting peak levels of concern in the childraising years.

Many of the work-life balance concerns relate to the management of shift work and rosters, and the qualitative data provides detailed evidence that unpredictable rosters are particularly stressful. Please see *Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017* for more detailed information on this issue.

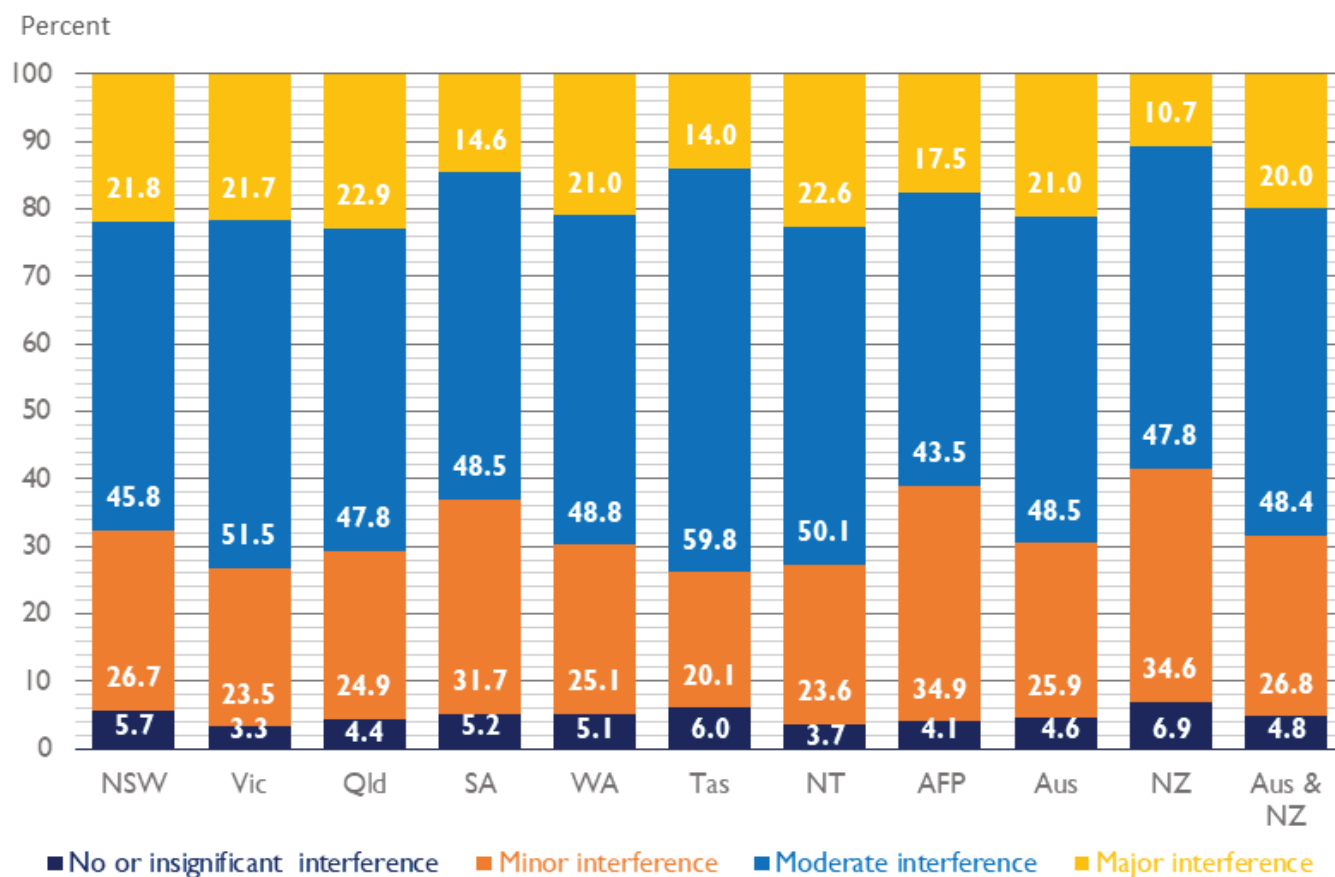
Many police stated that rosters are given to them with very little notice, and even after being set they may change frequently. Inability to plan ahead has major impacts on respondents' lives, as well as those of their families. They accept shift work as an inevitable feature of their career choice, and when antisocial hours are known well ahead of time they can still be planned for. However, those same hours become unmanageable when they are unpredictable and change with little notice.

Some said that requests for a day off are often not granted, even when made months in advance. Many police indicated that because of this, if they had a commitment which they were unable to attend they would have to use leave to do so, or call in sick. This in turn increases the stress on their colleagues, worsening the instability of the roster. For some, for example those needing to attend regular medical appointments, managing this might require the use of much of their leave. Unpredictable rosters that change frequently affect not just police officers but all of those around them.

Unpredictability is worsened by high rates of absenteeism, either due to illness or stress. When leave is taken for any reason, or if part-time staff are rostered on as part of the team, they are frequently not backfilled, worsening roster instability and increasing workload pressures. Other concerns include unanticipated overtime, long hours, being on call, night shifts, fatigue and inadequate recovery time, and the impact of specific shifts on family and social life. The data demonstrates that the combination of these factors can have extremely significant impacts on the physical and mental wellbeing of police officers, and on their families.

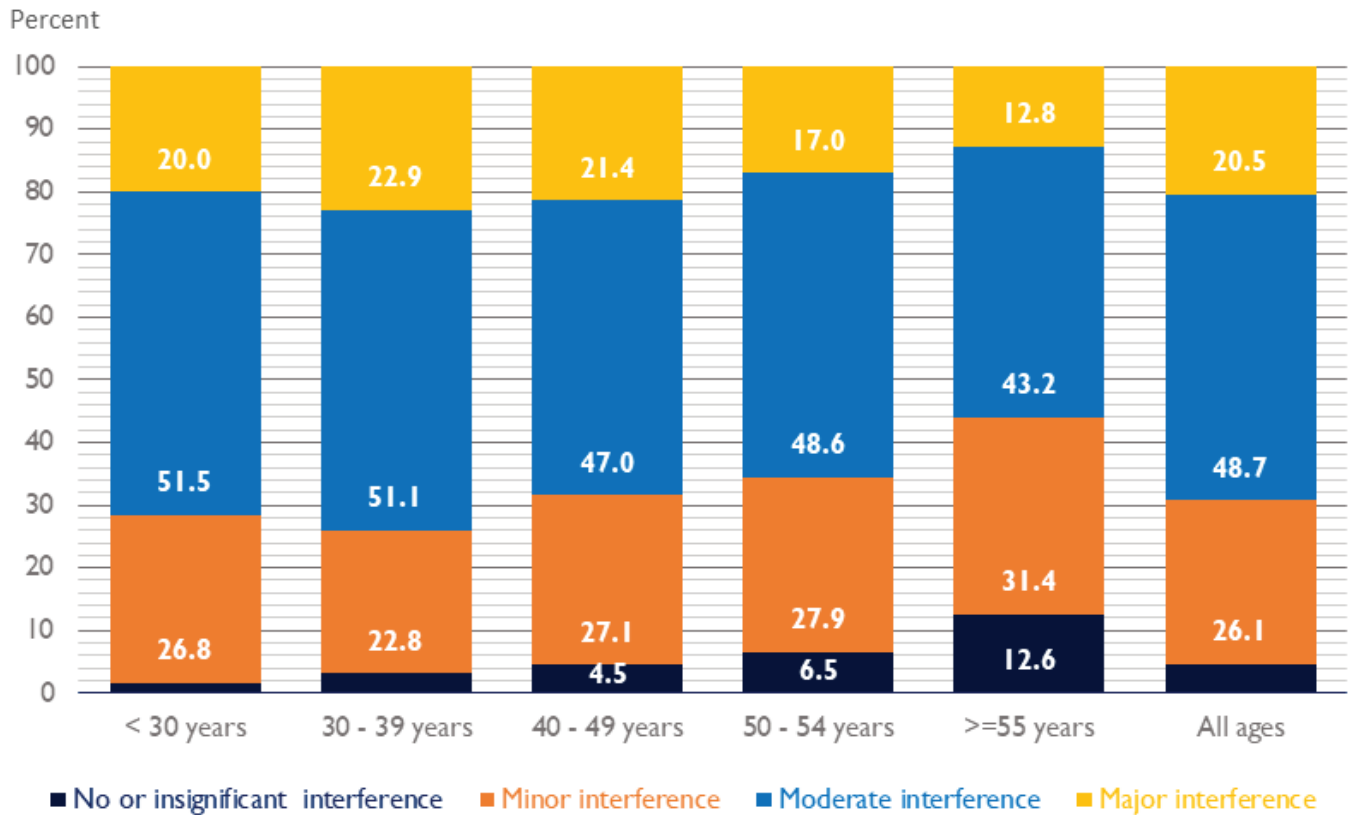
The data shows that FWAs mitigate interference. Only 49 percent of police on FWAs say they experience moderate to major interference, compared with 70 percent of regular full-time police.

**Chart 7.1 Proportion (%) of police for whom work rosters cause interference with important aspects of life outside work, by level of interference and jurisdiction.**

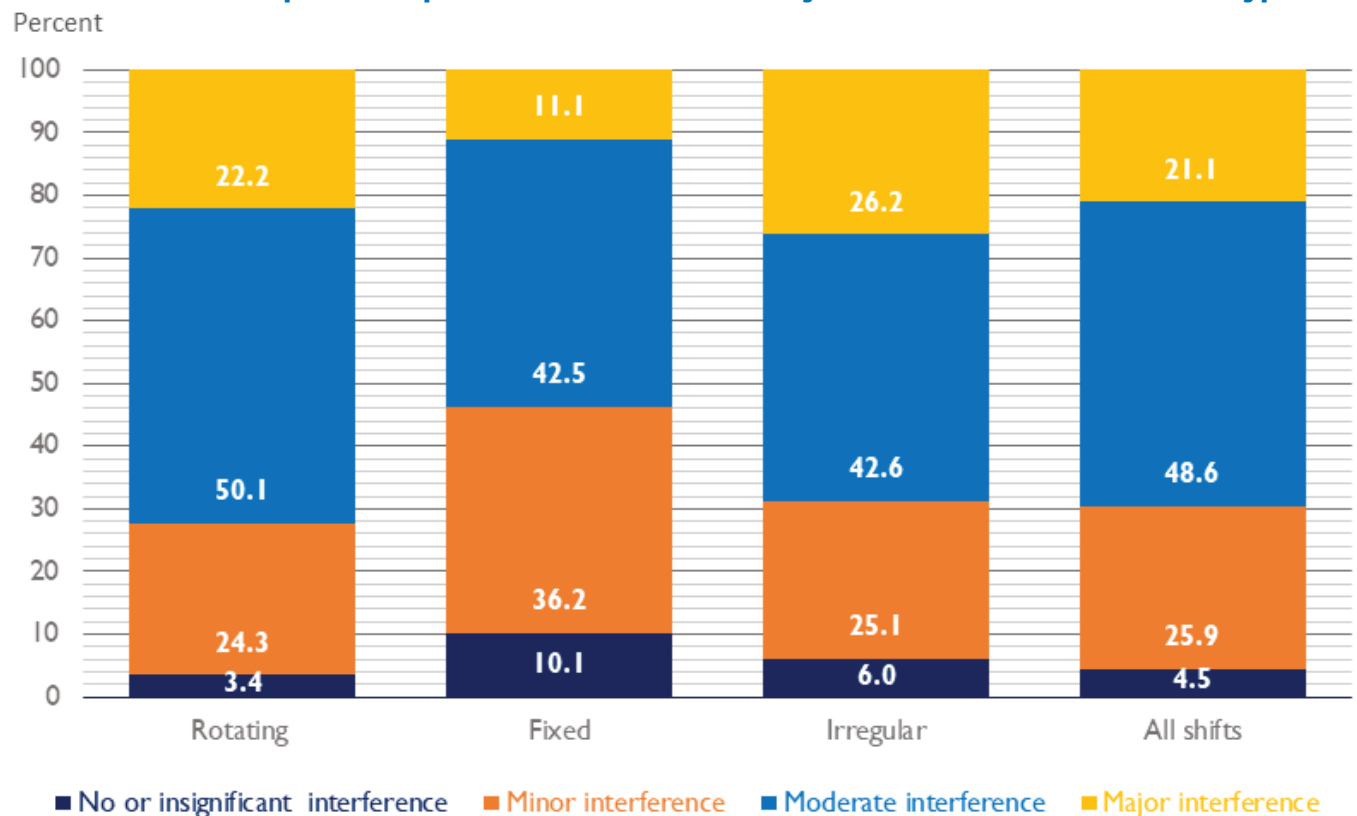




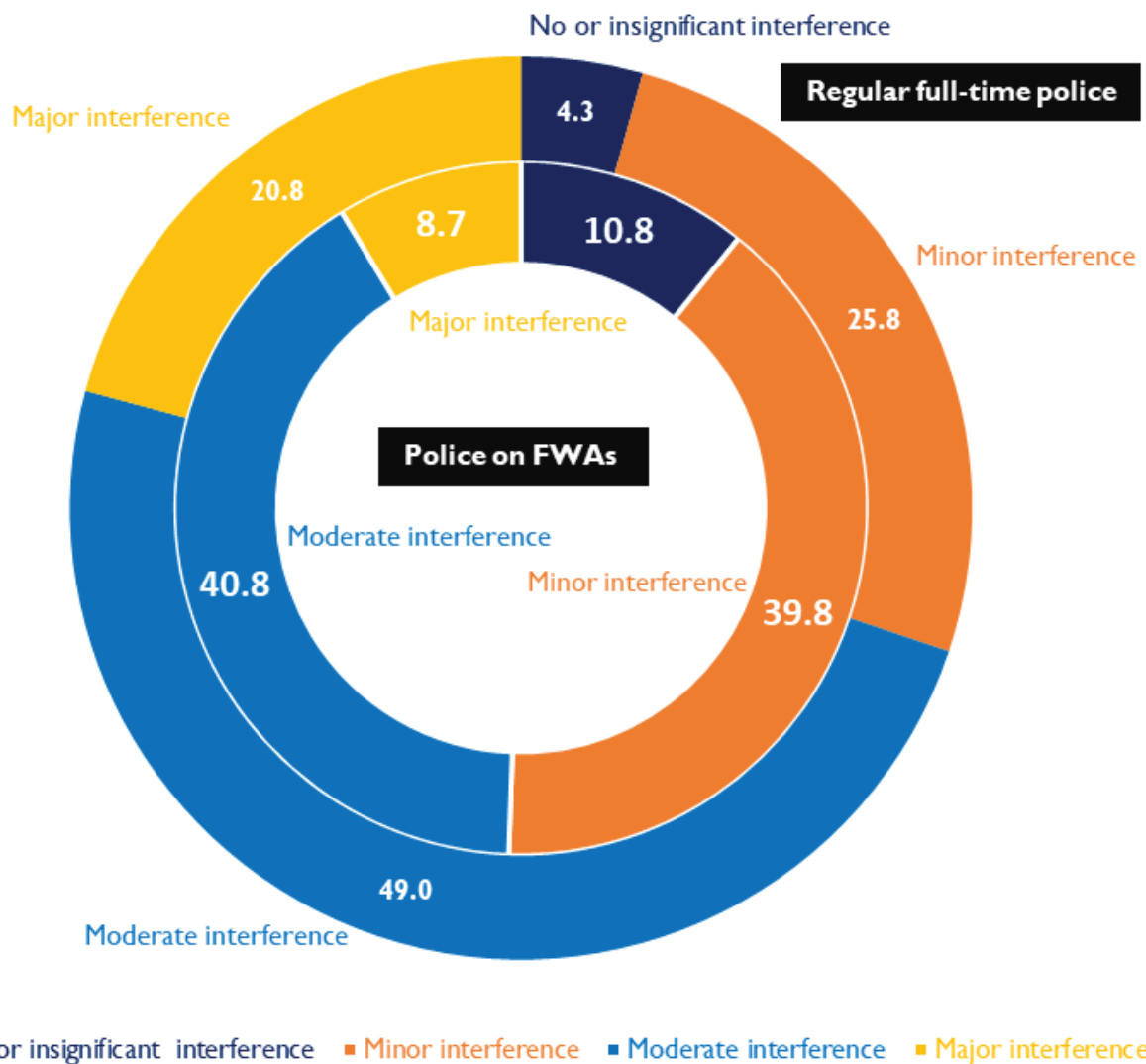
**Chart 7.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand for whom work rosters cause interference with important aspects of life outside work, by level of interference and age group.**



**Chart 7.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand for whom work rosters cause interference with important aspects of life outside work, by level of interference and shift type.**



**Chart 7.4 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand for whom work rosters cause interference with important aspects of life outside work, by level of interference and work arrangement (police on FWAs vs regular full-time police).**



## 8 Quality of the work environment: key factors

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*Police were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements concerning factors affecting the quality of their work environment using a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses of full-time police and those working less than an average 35 hours per week were compared. Differences between jurisdictions were also quantified. See Appendix 1 for information on how net overall agreement and disagreement ratings are calculated.*

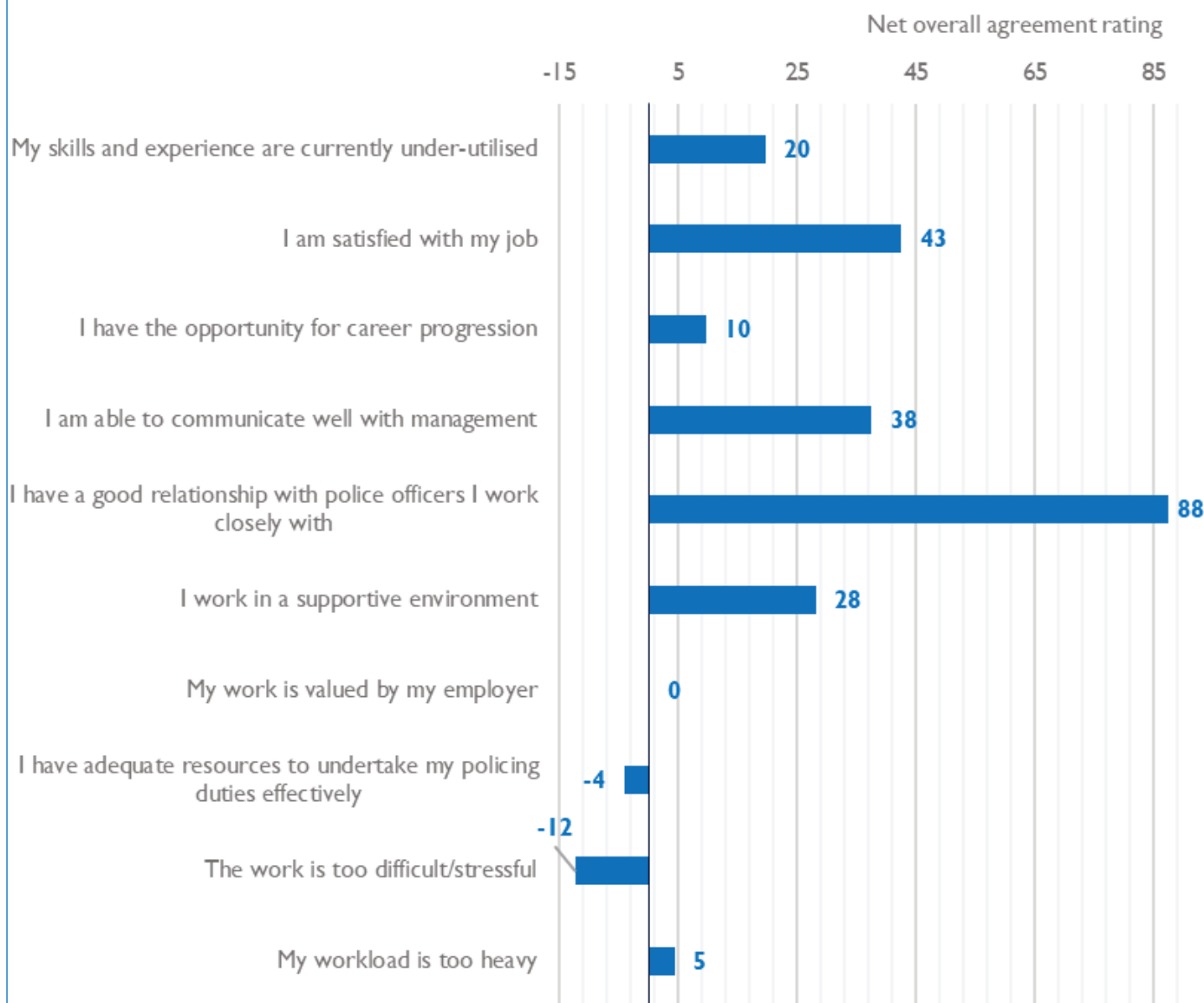
*Police selected their level of agreement with each of the following eight statements about the quality of their work environment:*

- *My workload is too heavy;*
- *The work is too difficult/stressful;*
- *I have adequate resources to undertake my policing duties effectively;*
- *My work is valued by my employer;*
- *I work in a supportive environment;*
- *I have a good relationship with the police officers I work closely with;*
- *I am able to communicate well with management;*
- *I have the opportunity for career progression;*
- *I am satisfied in my job;*
- *My skills and experience are currently under-utilised.*

Police report high overall levels of job satisfaction and generally believe they work in a supportive work environment. This arguably reflects the quality of work relationships, rather than more specific factors relating to resourcing, workload and stress levels, the utilisation of their skills, or opportunities for career progression. While police tend to be ambivalent or negative about some of these “hard” factors, an overwhelming majority report good relationships with fellow officers and the capacity to communicate well with management.



**Chart 8.1 Ten statements about the quality of the working environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand.**



# 9 Police profiles and the quality of the work environment

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*Responses to statements about factors underpinning the quality of the work environment (see section 8, previously) were analysed to see if quality of the work environment varies with gender, duty, locality, roster type, or full-time status of work.*

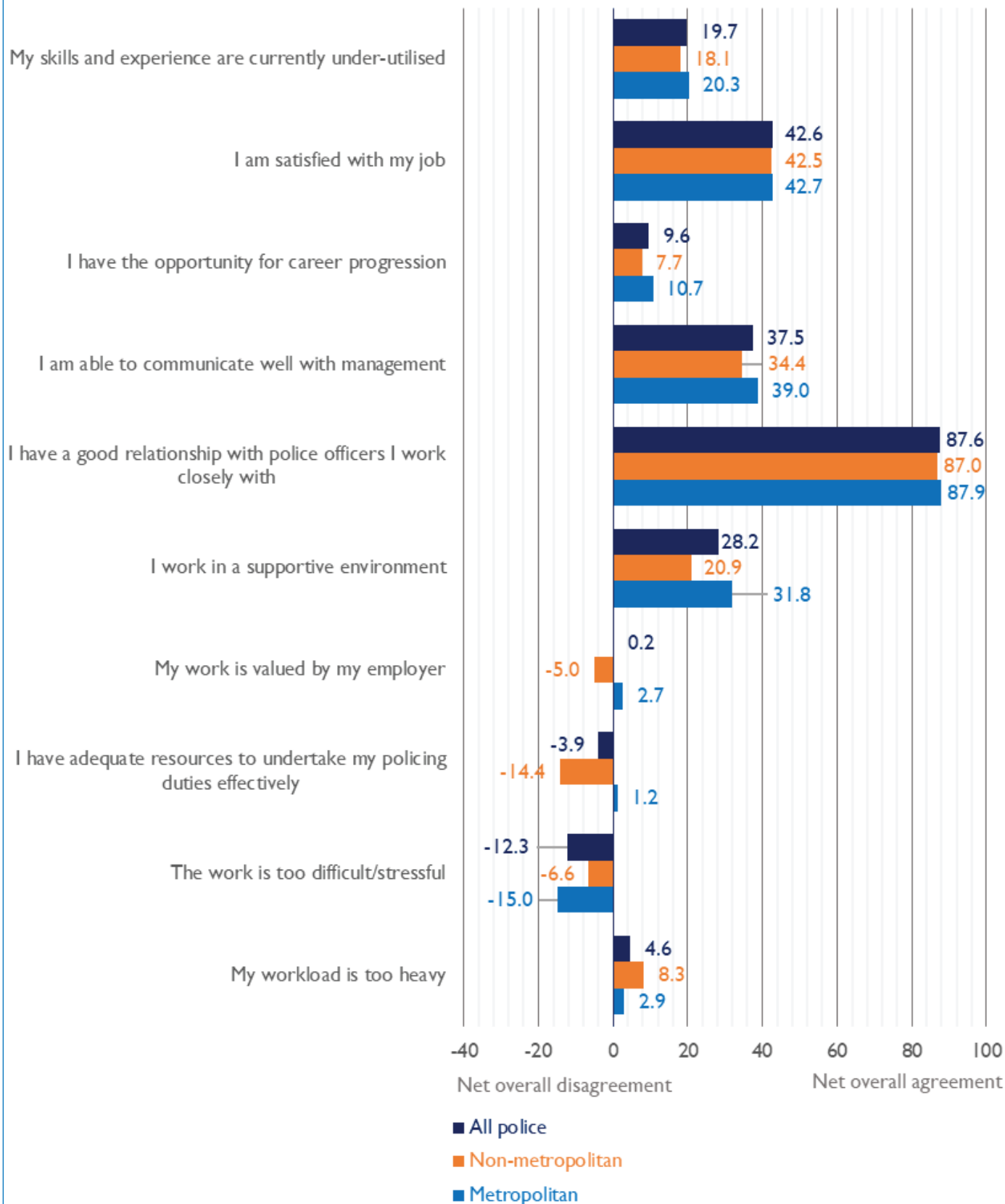
## Metropolitan and non-metropolitan differences

For most questions, police make similar assessments whether they work in metropolitan or non-metropolitan settings.

Responses do vary in some questions. The most significant difference is around the question of adequate resourcing. While metropolitan officers are evenly divided, their non-metropolitan colleagues are more likely to disagree with this statement, with a moderate net disagreement rating of (-14).

Overall, non-metropolitan police do not support the statement that their work is valued by their employer, with low net disagreement at (-5). Regarding supportive environments, non-metropolitan police agree less strongly (+21) than metropolitan police (+32) that they enjoy supportive work environments. Survey data suggests that metropolitan police appear somewhat more concerned that their work is too difficult or stressful than non-metropolitan police.

**Chart 9.1 Ten statements about the quality of the work environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand by locality type.**



## Type of duty

The survey responses suggest that type of police duty has a clear impact on the quality of the working environment. "Relationship with close work colleagues" is the only dimension to elicit a similar response from all types of duty, suggesting that police across the board feel that they work in a close-knit team environment.

Consistently satisfied responses regarding all the job quality factors are given by those in command, control and corporate services. Along with those in specialist operations and support services, they are in net disagreement with statements that their workload is too heavy or too difficult/stressful, and in net agreement that they have adequate resources and that their work is valued.

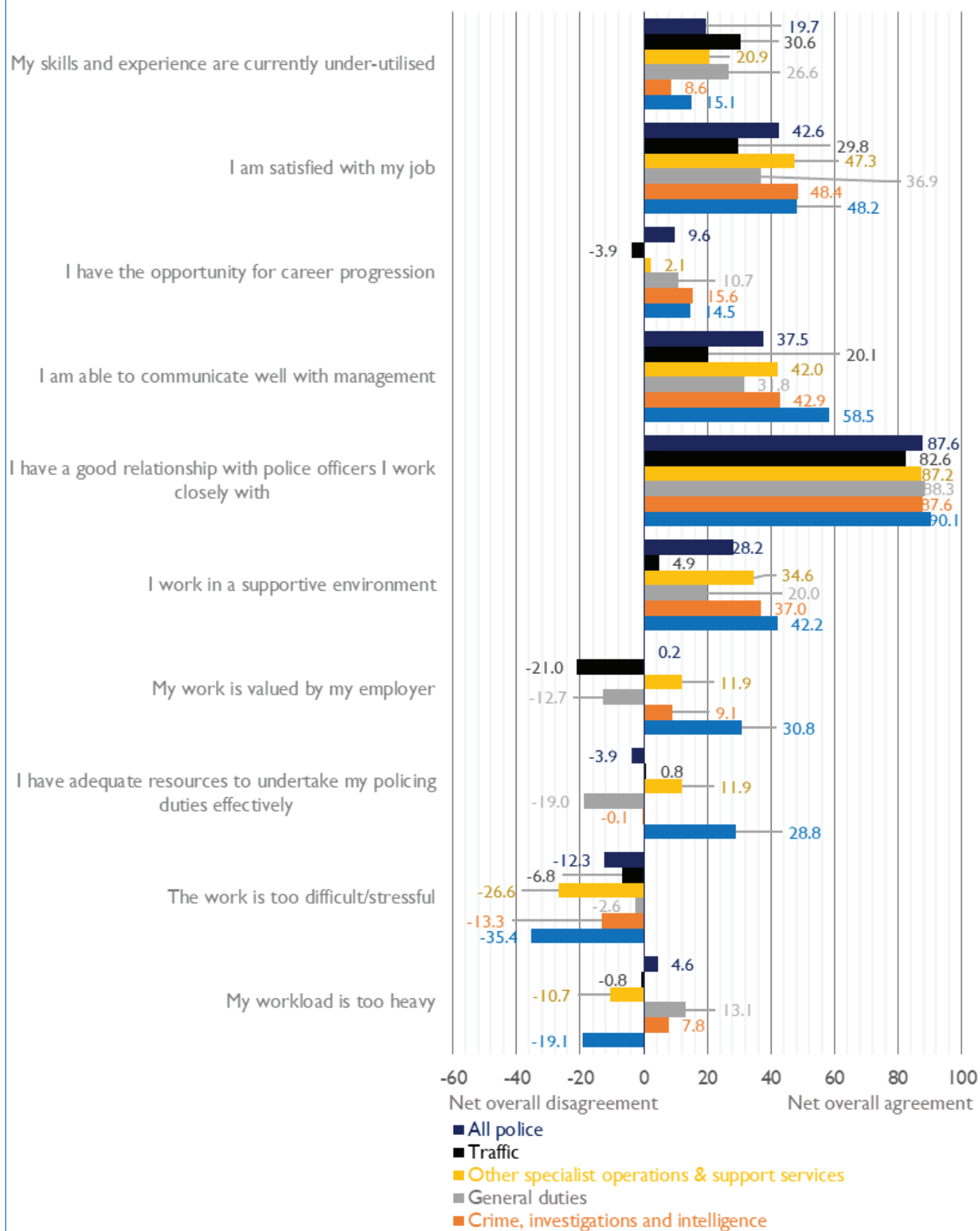
Those in specialist operations and support services follow a generally similar pattern, although they are much less likely to agree that they have the opportunity for career progression with net agreement of (+2) compared with (+15) for command, control and corporate services.

Those in crime investigations and intelligence follow a slightly different pattern, although overall their results suggest high levels of satisfaction with their working environment. Their major problems relate to their workload, with net agreement of (+8) that their workload is too heavy, and a mixed response about their access to adequate resources to be able to work effectively. They have the highest net agreement regarding overall job satisfaction, and more than other duty types feel that their experience and skills are being utilised.

General duties and traffic police have quite a different and much less positive set of responses. Of all duty types, general duties police officers are most in agreement with the statement that their workload is too heavy, with a net agreement of (+13). General duties is the only duty type recording net disagreement (-19) with the statement that they have adequate resources to perform their policing duties.

General duties and traffic police both have overall negative net responses to the proposition that they feel valued by their employer (-13) and (-21) respectively, whereas other duty types record net positive responses. General duties police (+20) and traffic police (+5) also agree least with the statement that they work in a supportive environment. Traffic police record only low net agreement, reflecting strongly divided opinion. Their responses compare with overall strong levels of net agreement of (+28) for all police. Officers in traffic are the only duty type that disagree overall that they have the opportunity for career progression. General duties and traffic police both report the lowest levels of job satisfaction, and agree that their skills and experience are under-utilised, with (+21) net agreement for general duties officers and (+31) for traffic officers.

**Chart 9.2 Ten statements about the quality of the work environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand by duty type.**



## Rank

Responses from commissioned officers convey a very high level of satisfaction across all the work domains, and at significantly higher levels than other officers. The only dimension which produces a mixed response from commissioned officers is the statement that their workload is too heavy, with net disagreement at (-1) indicating evenly divided opinions. They are also the only rank to agree that they have adequate resources, with strong net agreement at (+30).

Sergeants' responses are much less positive overall. Of all the ranks, they have the highest net agreement that their workload is too heavy at (+16), and the lowest level of net disagreement with the statement that their work is too difficult or stressful at (-7), compared with net disagreement (-26) for commissioned officers. When compared with the commissioned officers, they do not share the perception of being adequately resourced, with (-8) net disagreement compared with (+30) for commissioned officers. They are in net agreement with the statement that their skills are under-utilised. Whilst they are in overall agreement with other positive statements, their net agreement with most domains is far less than that of commissioned officers, and not much different from constables.

The responses from constables are similar to, but consistently lower than, those of the sergeants. Their responses suggest moderate levels of satisfaction overall, with some specific concerns. Commissioned officers tend to agree overall that their work is valued, but constables are evenly divided on whether their work is valued by their employer, with those thinking they are not slightly outnumbering those who feel valued. Their level of net disagreement with this statement is (-4.5). The low level of net agreement that they have the opportunities for career progression, at (+7), suggests that this is a significant concern for constables.

## Roster type

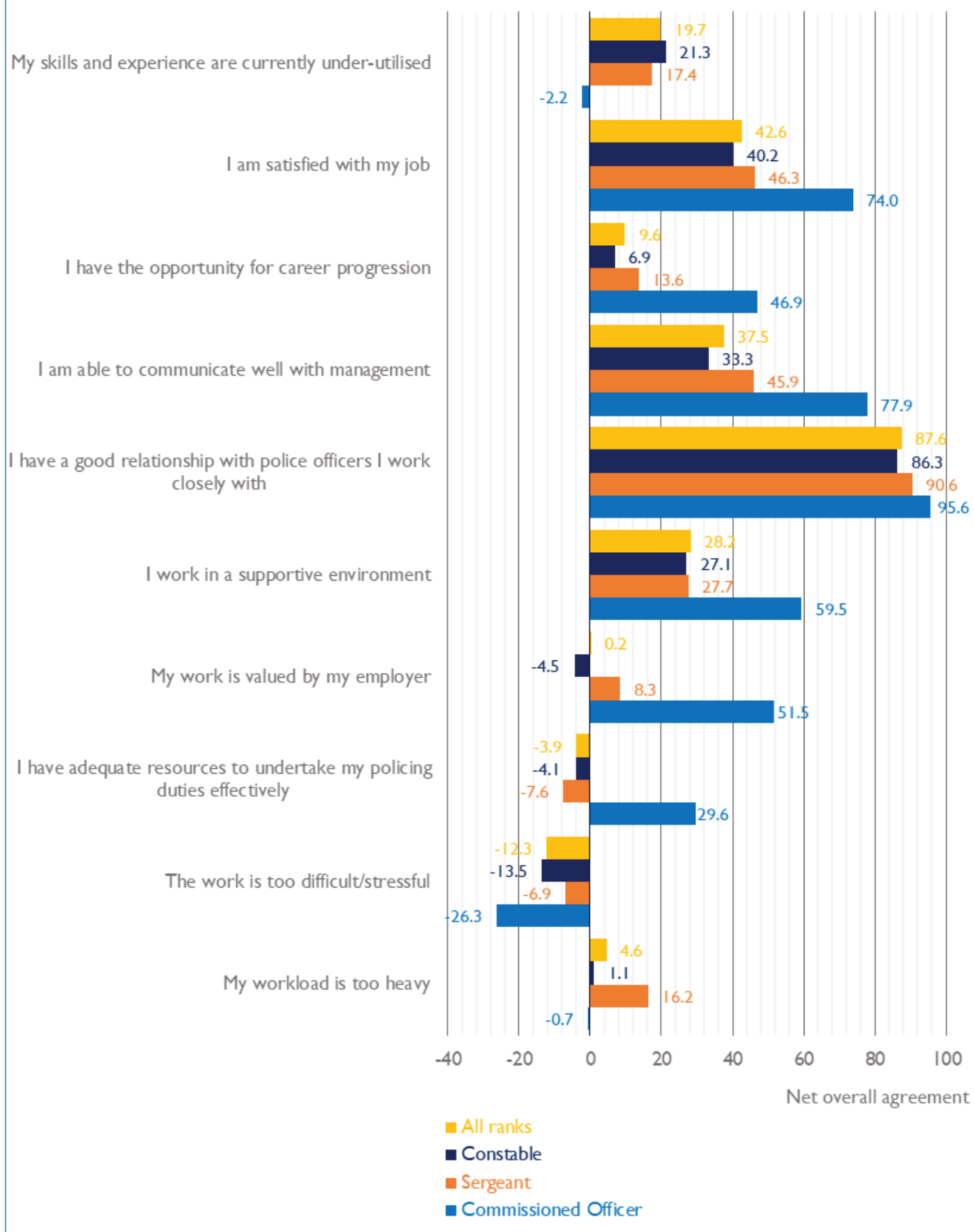
The results convey different workplace experiences according to roster types. Those working part-time normal office hours express high levels of satisfaction in all surveyed dimensions except opportunities for career progression, where they are in net disagreement (-9).

The next most satisfied group are those on full-time normal day time hours. They are the most positive of any group in relation to their opportunities for career progression, at (+9), and with their ability to communicate with management, and for overall job satisfaction.

Those on fixed shift rosters are also generally satisfied. Overall, they do not agree that their workload is too heavy, or that they need additional resources, and they are moderately positive about the other dimensions.

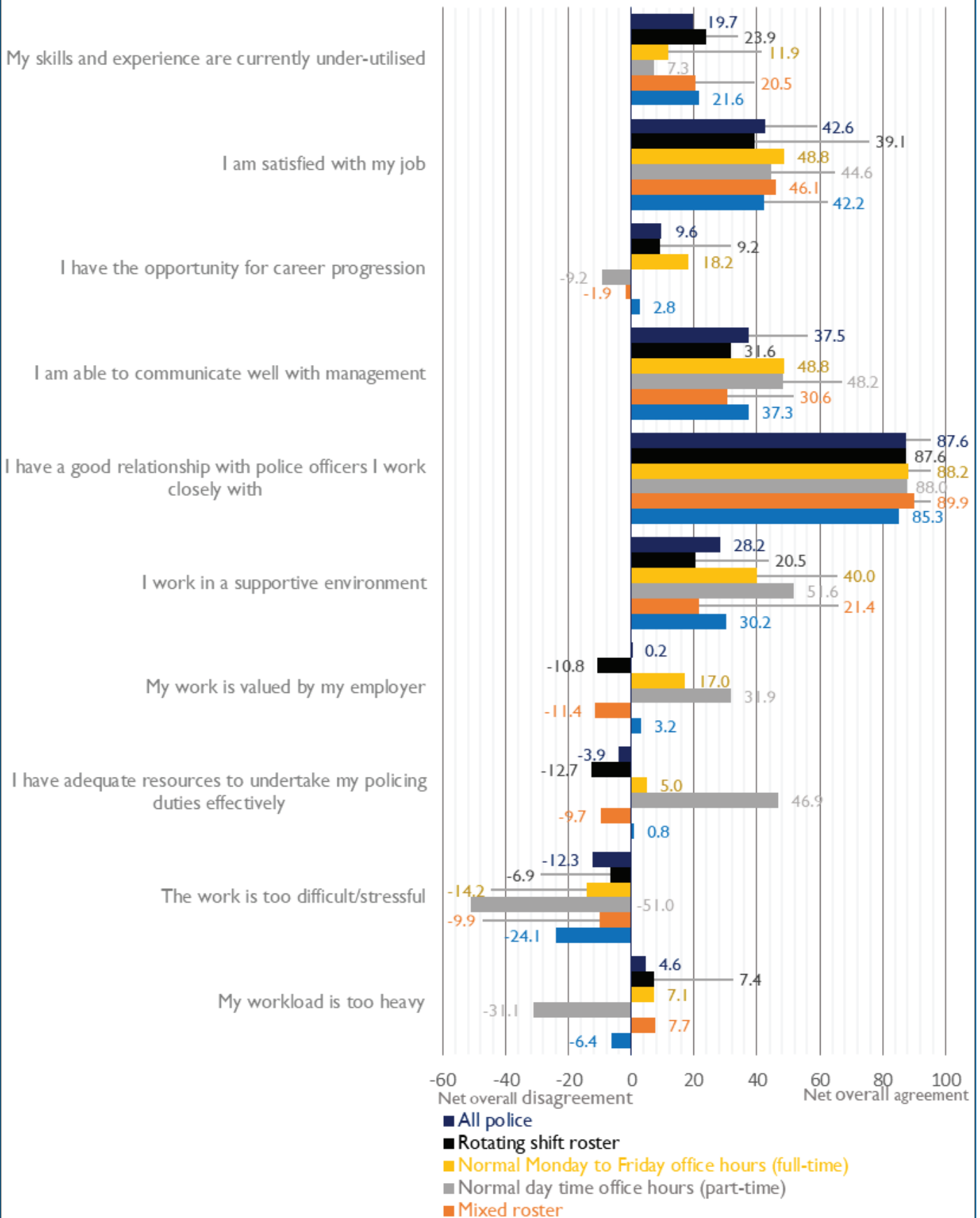
Officers working rotating shift rosters or mixed rosters have more concerns than their colleagues. Overall, they agree that their workload is too heavy, at about (+8). They are also the groups with the most concerns about resourcing, and who do not agree overall that their work is valued by their employer. All the officers working rosters, whether fixed shifts, rotating shifts or mixed rosters, are in moderate net agreement that their skills are under-utilised (between +20 to +23).

**Chart 9.3 Ten statements about the quality of the work environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand by rank.**





**Chart 9.4 Ten statements about the quality of the work environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand by roster type.**





## Gender

Women express more satisfaction than men across all domains with one exception, that of opportunity for career progression, where their level of net agreement is (+7) compared with male officers at (+11).

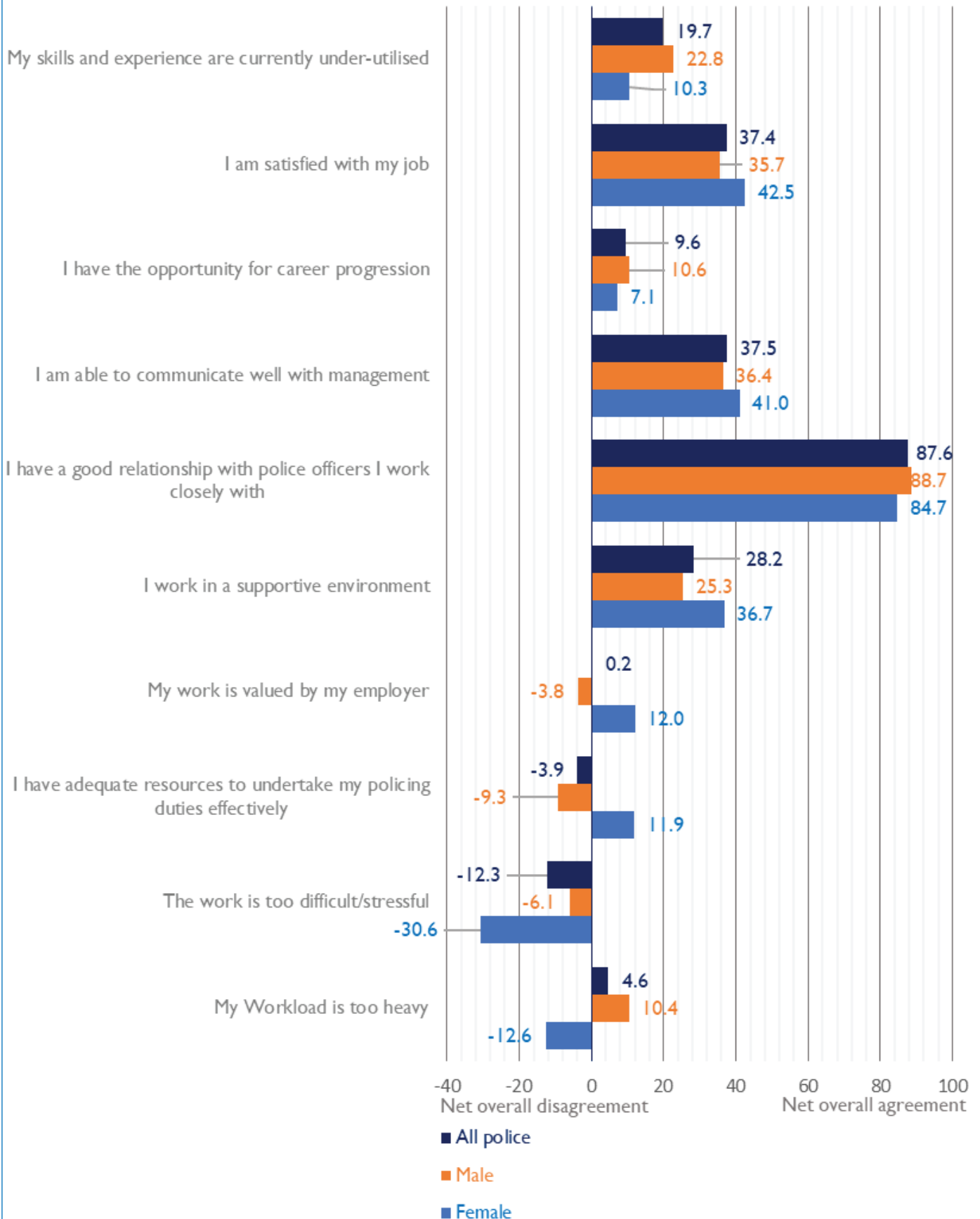
Whilst female officers are in net overall agreement (+12) that they have adequate resources to undertake their policing duties effectively, male police are in net overall disagreement (-10).

Male police are divided over whether employers value their work, and in overall terms disagree slightly (-4). In contrast, female officers are in moderate overall agreement (+12) that their work is valued by their employer.

Women are much less likely than men to think of their workload as too heavy or their work too difficult or stressful.



**Chart 9.5 Ten statements about the quality of the work environment: net overall agreement rating for each statement - police in Australia & New Zealand by gender.**



# Part C Profile of flexible working arrangements



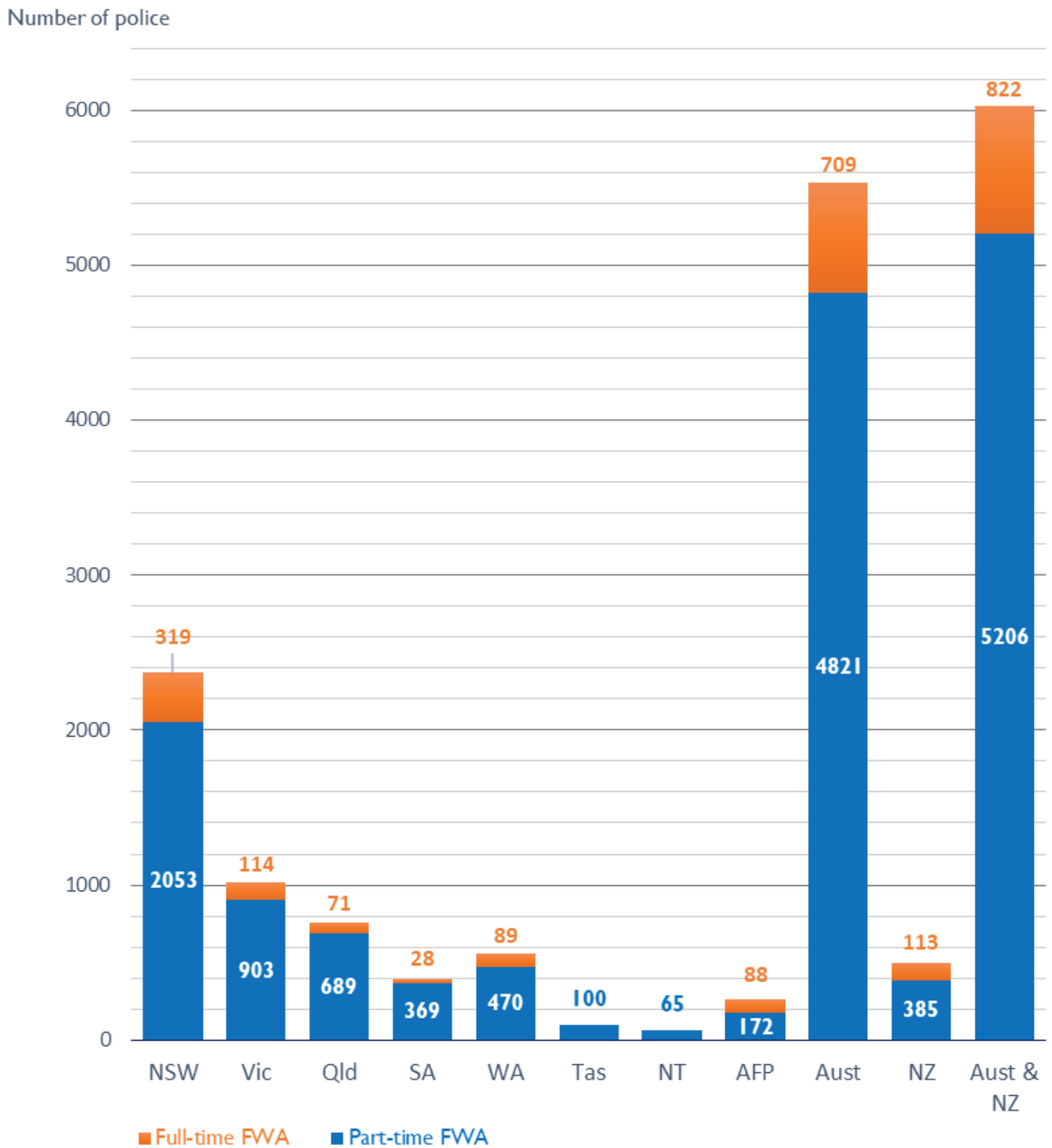
# 10 Number and distribution of flexible working arrangements

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The number of police working on FWAs in Australia and New Zealand is estimated from this survey to be now over 6,000. Of these, 5,530 are in Australia, and they make up around 9 percent of the total police workforce with more than 85 percent of them working part-time. Part-time police now make up 8 percent of the total Australian police workforce. There is great variation between jurisdictions in the frequency of FWAs.

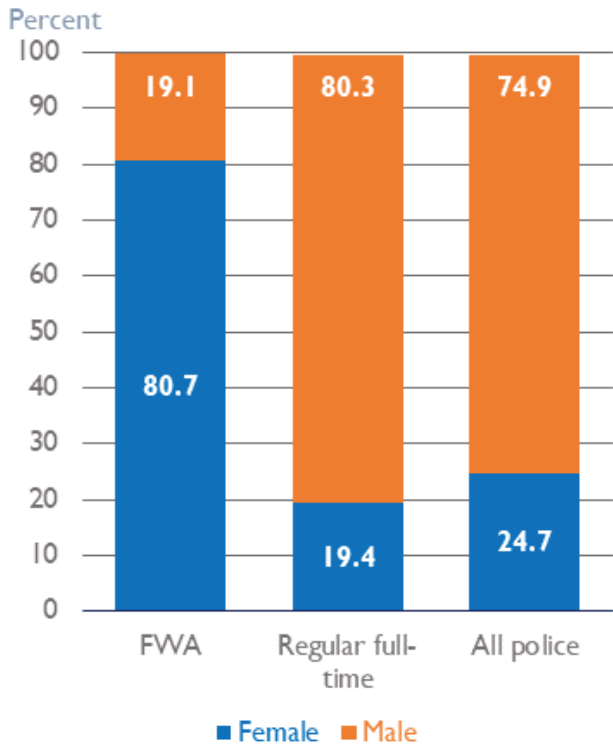
There is a marked female predominance in the uptake of FWAs: 80 percent of those on FWAs are women, though women make up only 25 percent of the Australian police force. FWAs are most common at the rank of constable (85 percent of all FWAs) and between the ages of 30 - 49 (87 percent of all FWAs). Police officers on general duties are under-represented on FWAs, whilst officers working in crime and investigations, or specialist operations and support services, are over-represented.

**Chart 10.1 Estimated number of FWAs by jurisdiction and full-time/part-time status.**

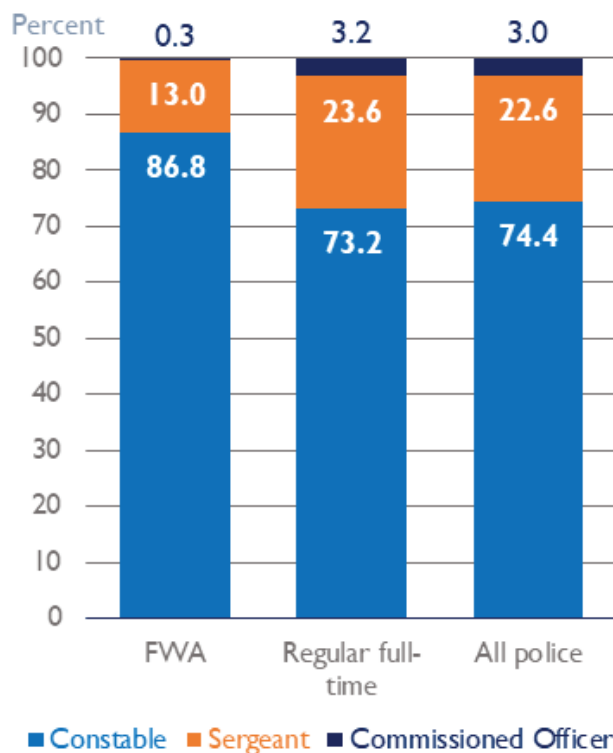




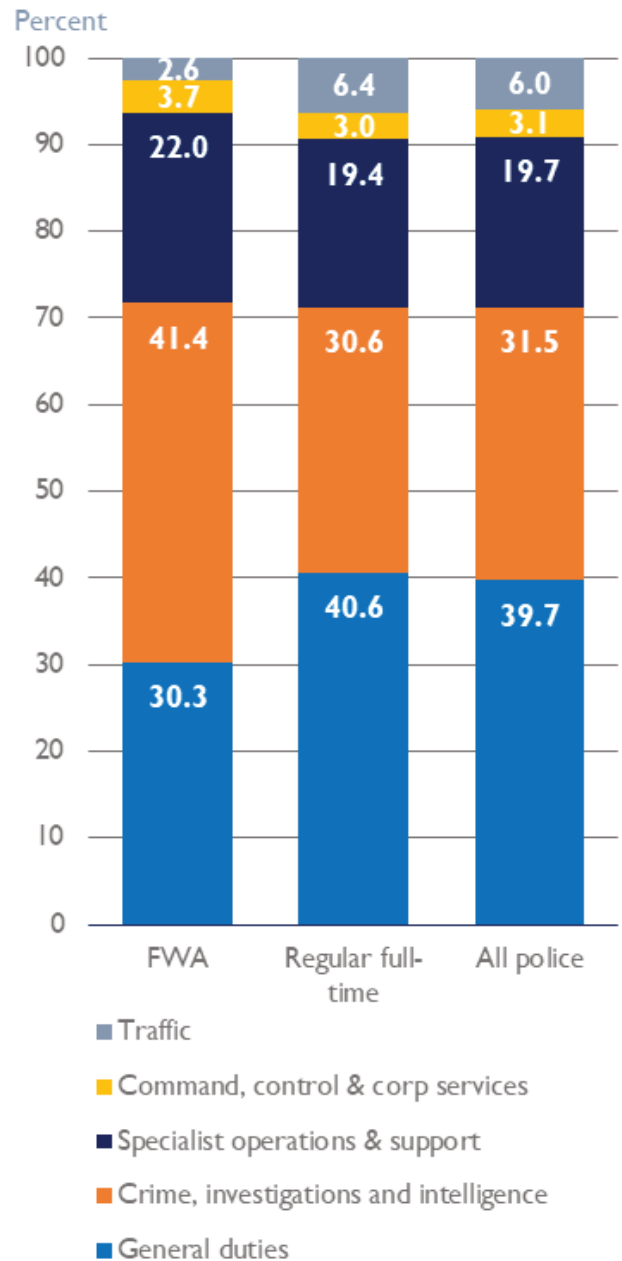
**Chart 10.2 Proportion (%) of female and male police within a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and, c) all police.**



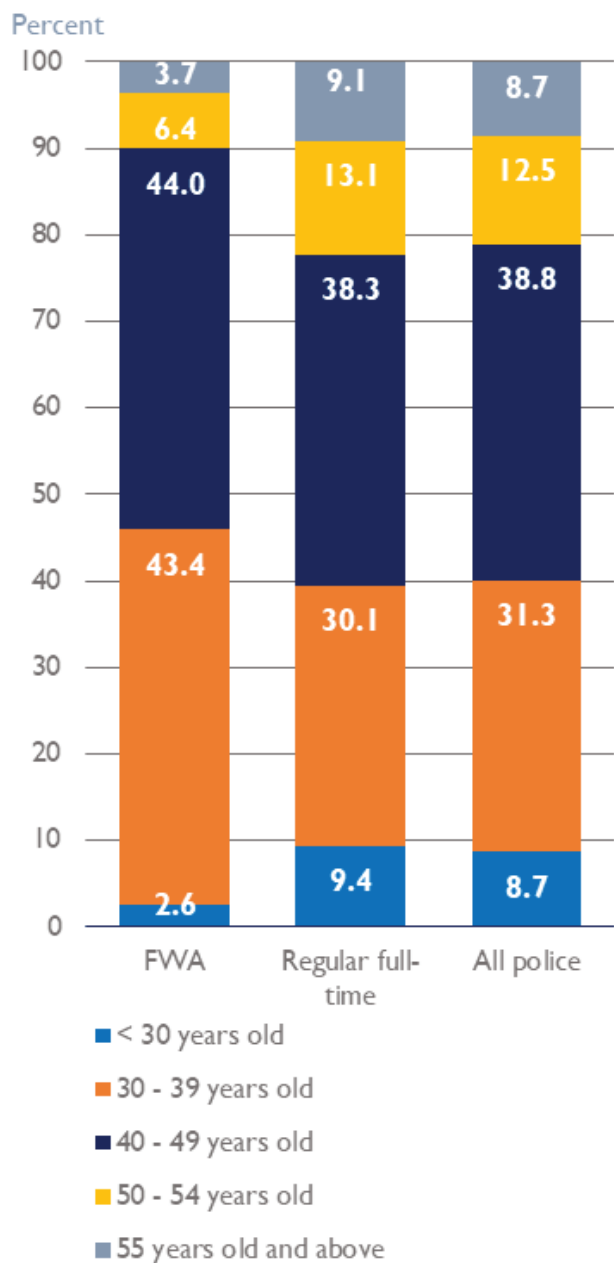
**Chart 10.3 Proportion (%) of constables, sergeants and commissioned officers within a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and, c) all police.**



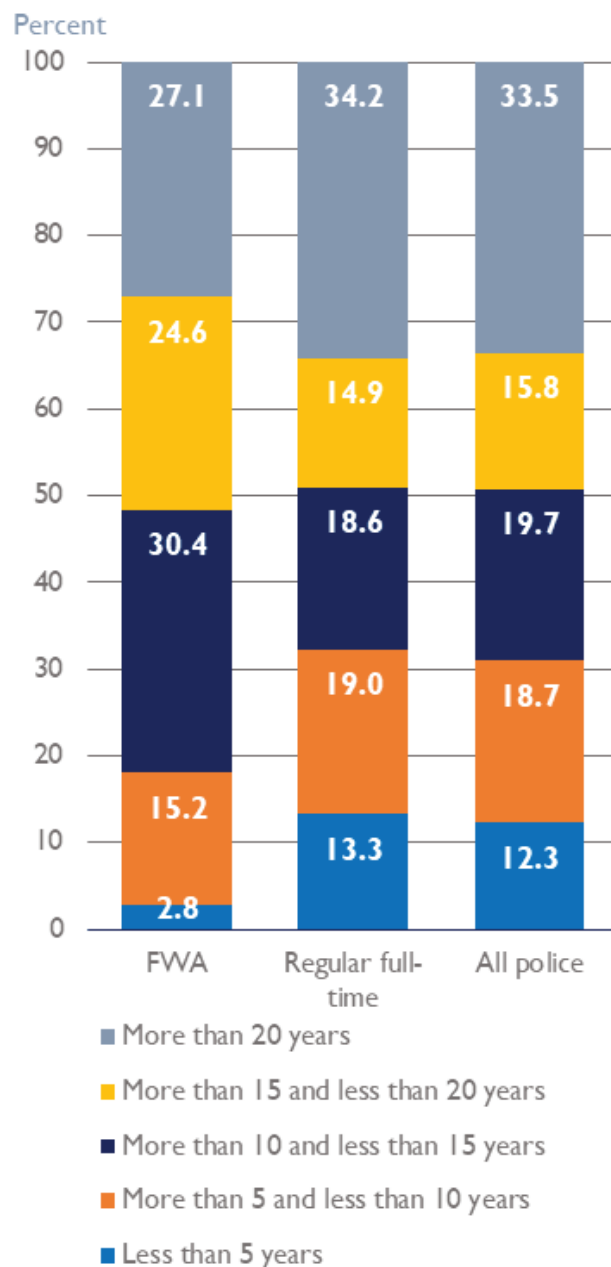
**Chart 10.4 Distribution (%) of police by duty type within a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and, c) all police.**



**Chart 10.5 Distribution (%) of police by age cohort within a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and, c) all police.**



**Chart 10.6 Distribution (%) of police by length of service cohort within a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and, c) all police.**



# 11 Types of flexible working arrangements

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Flexible working arrangements can be described in terms of changes to patterns of basic hours (full-time shift rosters, part-time shift rosters, full-time normal office hours, and part-time normal office hours) and a set of organising principles which describe combinations of shift types and lengths, and either fixed or flexible hours.

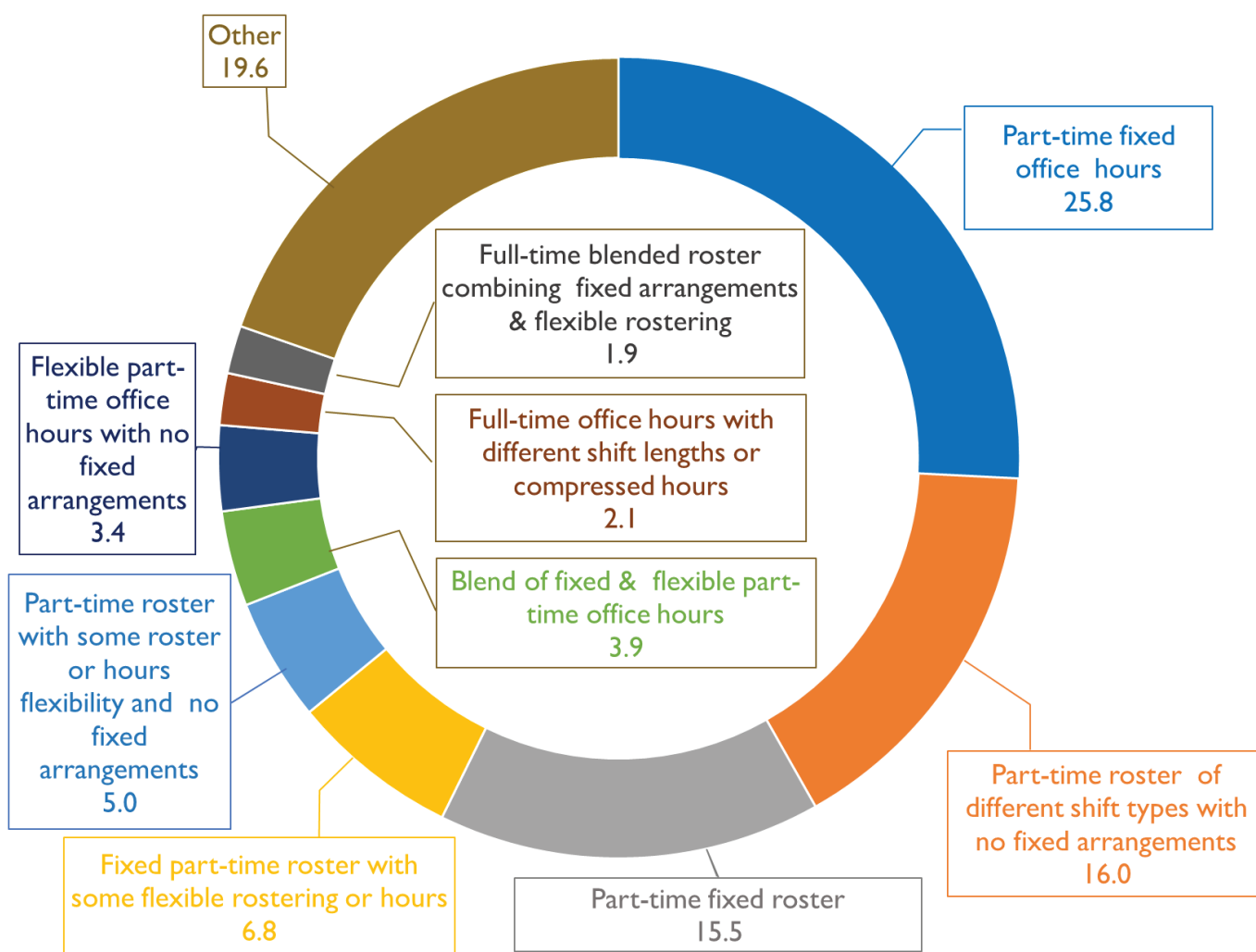
## Major types

The top nine types of FWA operating in Australia and New Zealand are:

- Part-time fixed hours (26% of all FWAs);
- Part-time roster of different shift types – no fixed arrangements (includes rotating shifts) (16%);
- Part-time fixed roster (16%);
- Part-time fixed roster with some flexible rostering or flexible hours (7%);
- Part-time roster with some roster/hours flexibility – no fixed arrangements (5%);
- Part-time office hours with a blend of fixed and flexible hours (4%);
- Flexible part-time office hours with no fixed arrangements (3%);
- Full-time office hours with different shift hours or compressed hours (2%);
- Full-time blended roster combining fixed arrangements & flexible rostering (2%).



**Chart 11.1 Distribution (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs by major types of FWA.**



# 12 Reasons for entering into flexible working arrangements

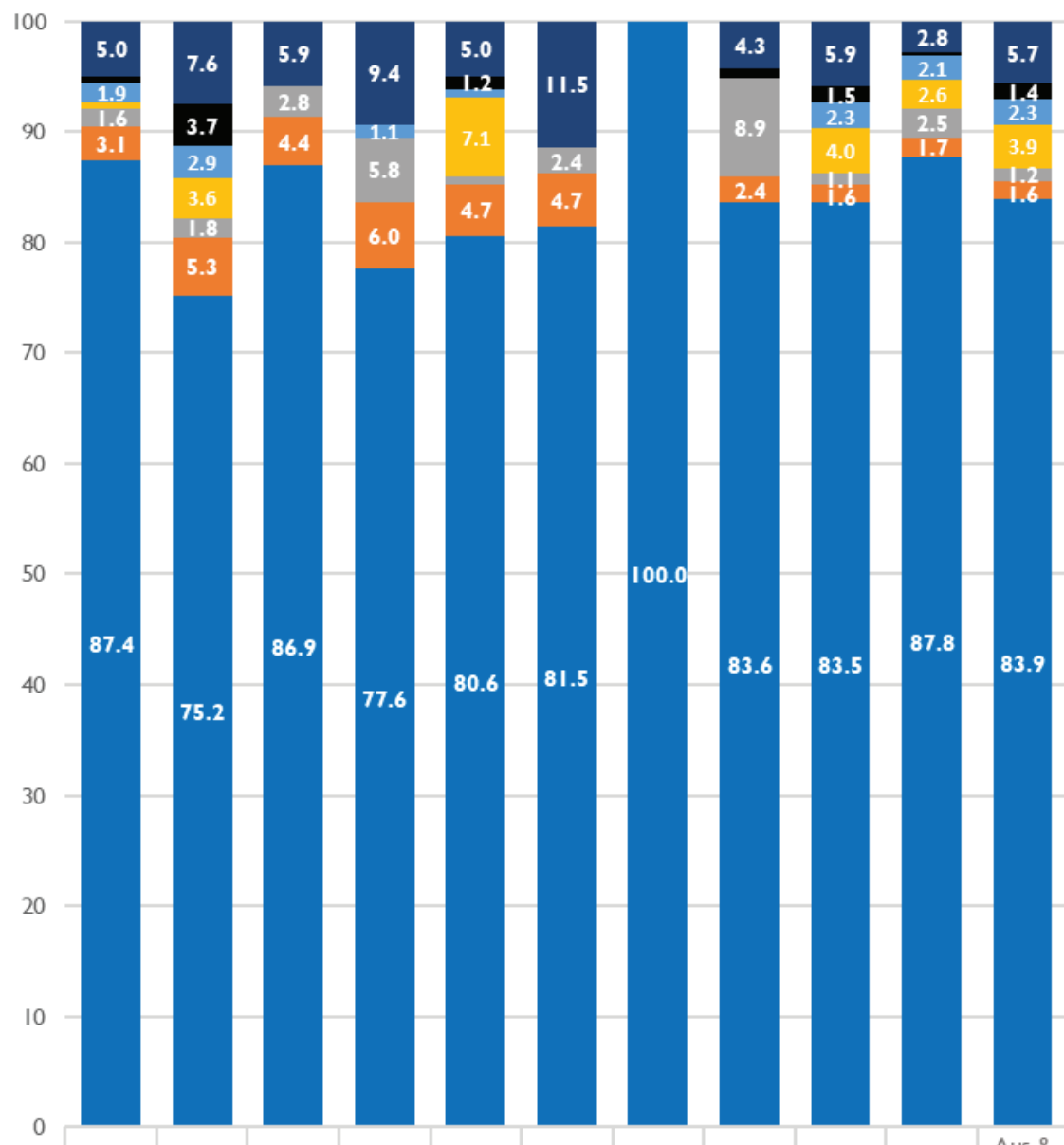


*Police who currently work on FWAs provided the reasons for requesting their FWA*

In all jurisdictions, the great majority of current FWAs are requested for parenting, and of these, most requests are from women. Nonetheless nearly half of all the requests from men are also for parenting reasons. When broken down by age, the demand for FWAs for parenting is, not surprisingly, maximal in the two decades between 30 and 49 years. However some officers in their 50s are still requiring FWAs for parenting reasons. This may reflect the fact that challenges in parenting do not go away once children start school, and difficulties in making childcare arrangements for school age children can in fact intensify, especially if both parents are working, as many comments from police reported elsewhere in this study indicate (see 19: Childcare needs and the demand for flexible working arrangements).

Reasons for male requests for FWAs are more diverse than the reasons of females. Transition to retirement and work stress are rarely given as reasons for FWAs by females, and are almost exclusively associated with male requests. Transition to retirement requests show great variation between jurisdictions. Carer responsibilities, work stress and illness affect both genders, although in numerical terms women have more FWAs for carer responsibilities, and these requests currently peak in the 40 - 49 year old age group.

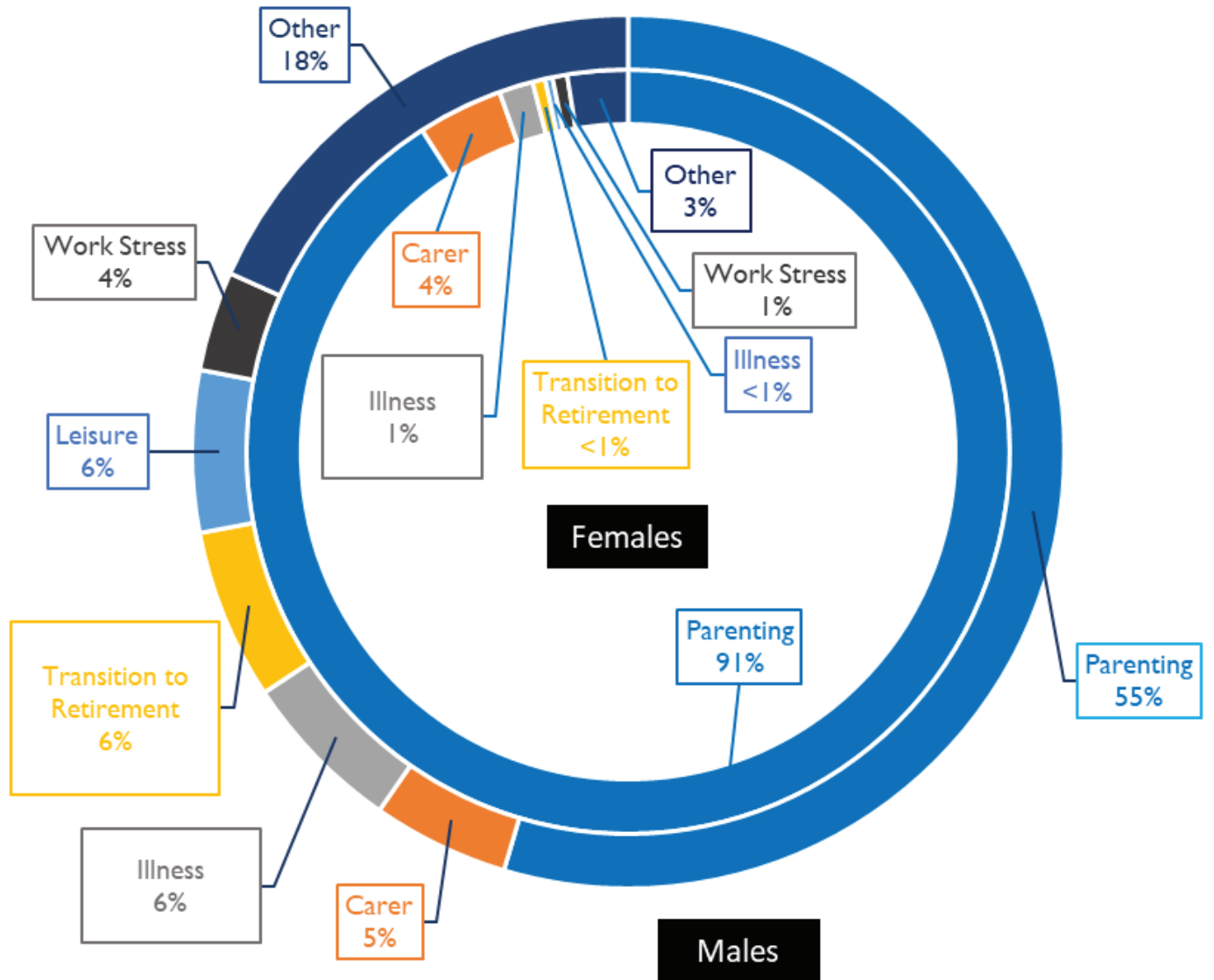
**Chart 12.1 Distribution (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs by reason for FWA and jurisdiction.**



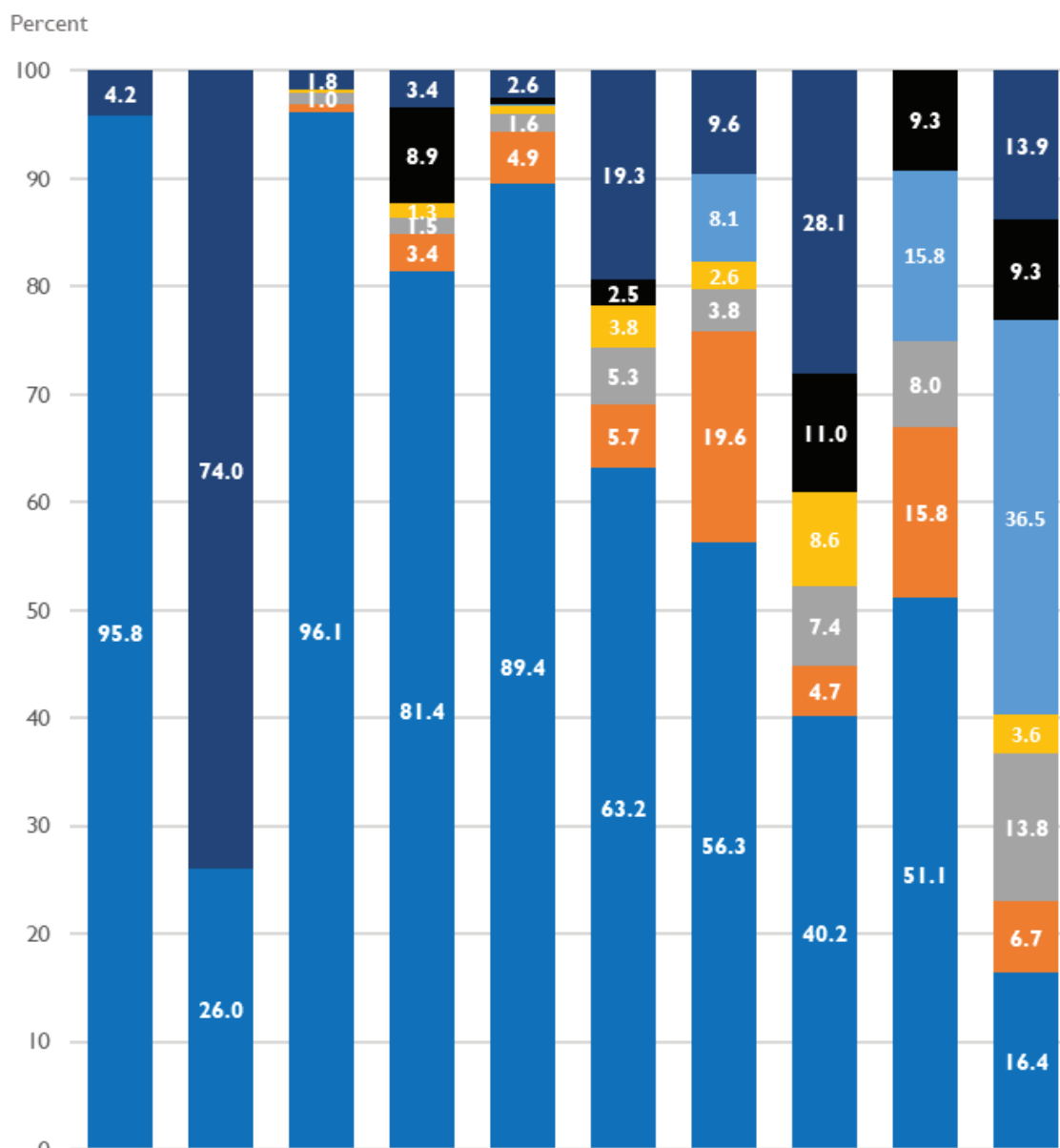
	NSW	Vic	Qld	SA	WA	Tas	NT	AFP	Aus	NZ	Aus & NZ
Other	5.0	7.6	5.9	9.4	5.0	11.5	0.0	4.3	5.9	2.8	5.7
Work Stress	0.6	3.7	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.9	1.5	0.4	1.4
Leisure	1.9	2.9	0.0	1.1	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3	2.1	2.3
Transition to Retirement	0.6	3.6	0.0	0.0	7.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	2.6	3.9
Illness	1.6	1.8	2.8	5.8	0.8	2.4	0.0	8.9	1.1	2.5	1.2
Carer	3.1	5.3	4.4	6.0	4.7	4.7	0.0	2.4	1.6	1.7	1.6
Parenting	87.4	75.2	86.9	77.6	80.6	81.5	100.0	83.6	83.5	87.8	83.9



**Chart 12.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs by reason for FWA and gender.**



**Chart 12.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs by reason for FWA, gender and age range.**



Reason	Female < 30	Male < 30	Female 30 - 39	Male 30 - 39	Female 40 - 49	Male 40 - 49	Female 50 - 54	Male 50 - 54	Female 55 and over	Male 55 and over
Other	4.2	74.0	1.8	3.4	2.6	19.3	9.6	28.1	0.0	13.9
Leisure	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.9	0.6	2.5	0.0	11.0	9.3	9.3
Transition to retirement	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0	8.1	0.0	15.8	36.5
Work stress	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.3	0.7	3.8	2.6	8.6	0.0	3.6
Illness	0.0	0.0	1.0	1.5	1.6	5.3	3.8	7.4	8.0	13.8
Carer	0.0	0.0	0.8	3.4	4.9	5.7	19.6	4.7	15.8	6.7
Parenting	95.8	26.0	96.1	81.4	89.4	63.2	56.3	40.2	51.1	16.4

# 13 Changes in duty when commencing a flexible working arrangement

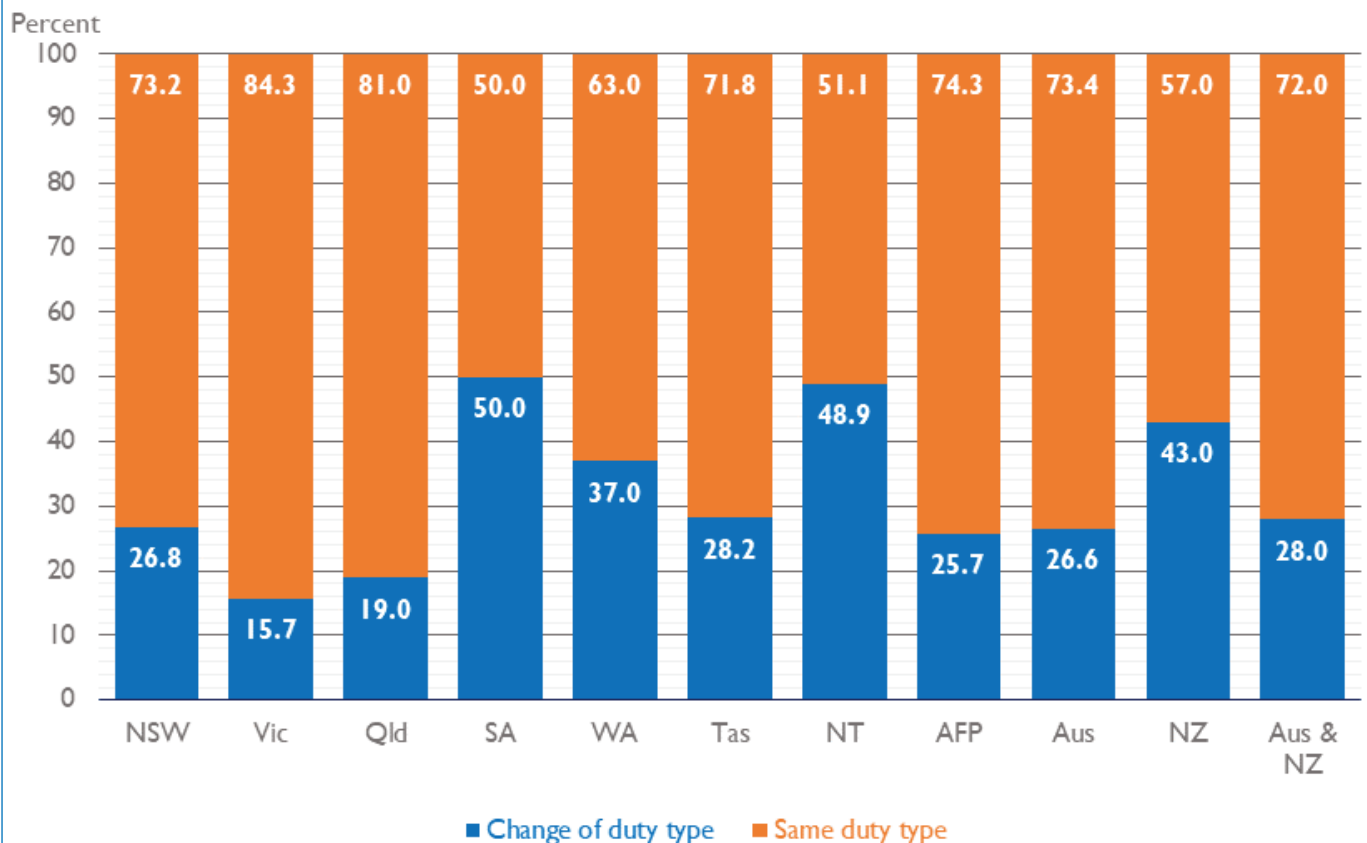
*To understand in detail the effects of uptake of FWAs across the police workforce, police on FWAs were asked “Did you change duty type when commencing FWA?”*

Just over one quarter of Australian police on FWAs changed duty on commencement of their FWA, with proportions varying across jurisdictions. In New Zealand over 40 percent changed duties.

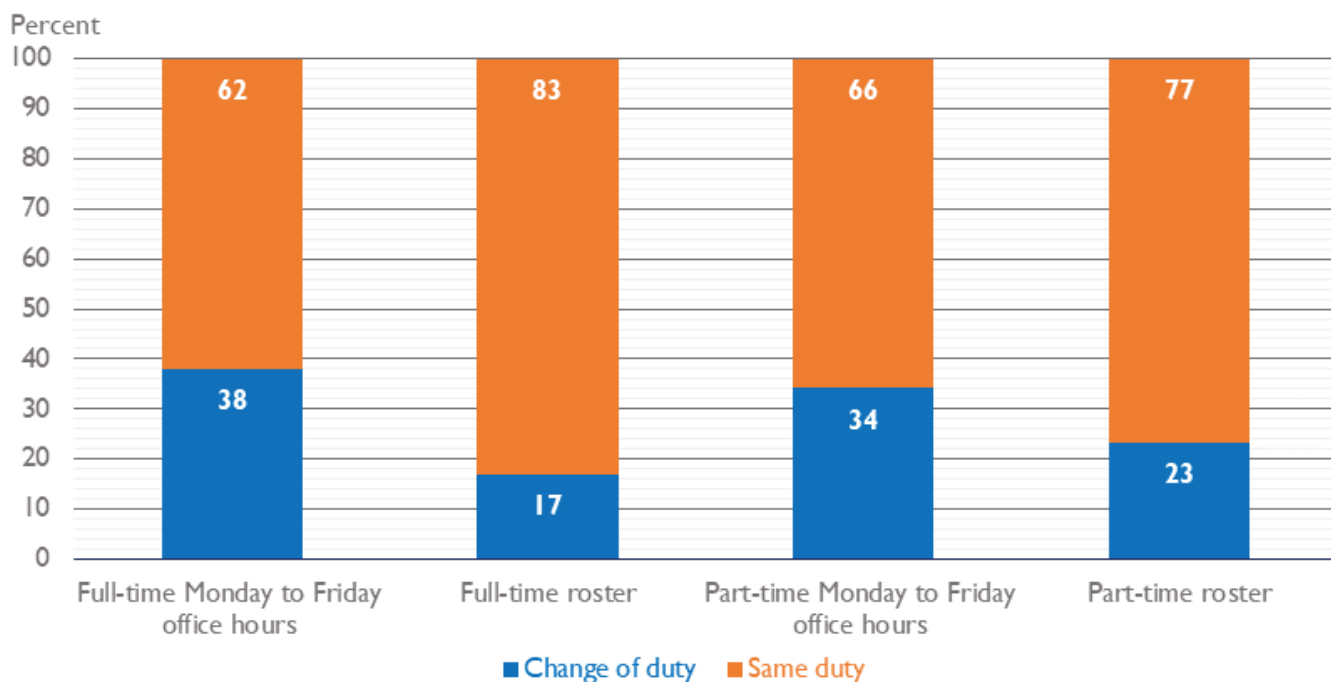
When this same question is looked at in terms of the working hours arrangement of those who changed, it reveals higher rates of change for those working either full-time or part-time office hours, when compared with shift work rosters.

This suggests that those who change duty type are likely to switch to a role that can be done within office hours, with the highest rate of change occurring in command, control and corporate services. Those who changed duties were least likely to end up in traffic and general duties, which is consistent with the under-representation of FWAs in these areas of policing. For instance, whilst general duties accounts for 40 percent of the police force, only 30 percent of FWAs are in general duties.

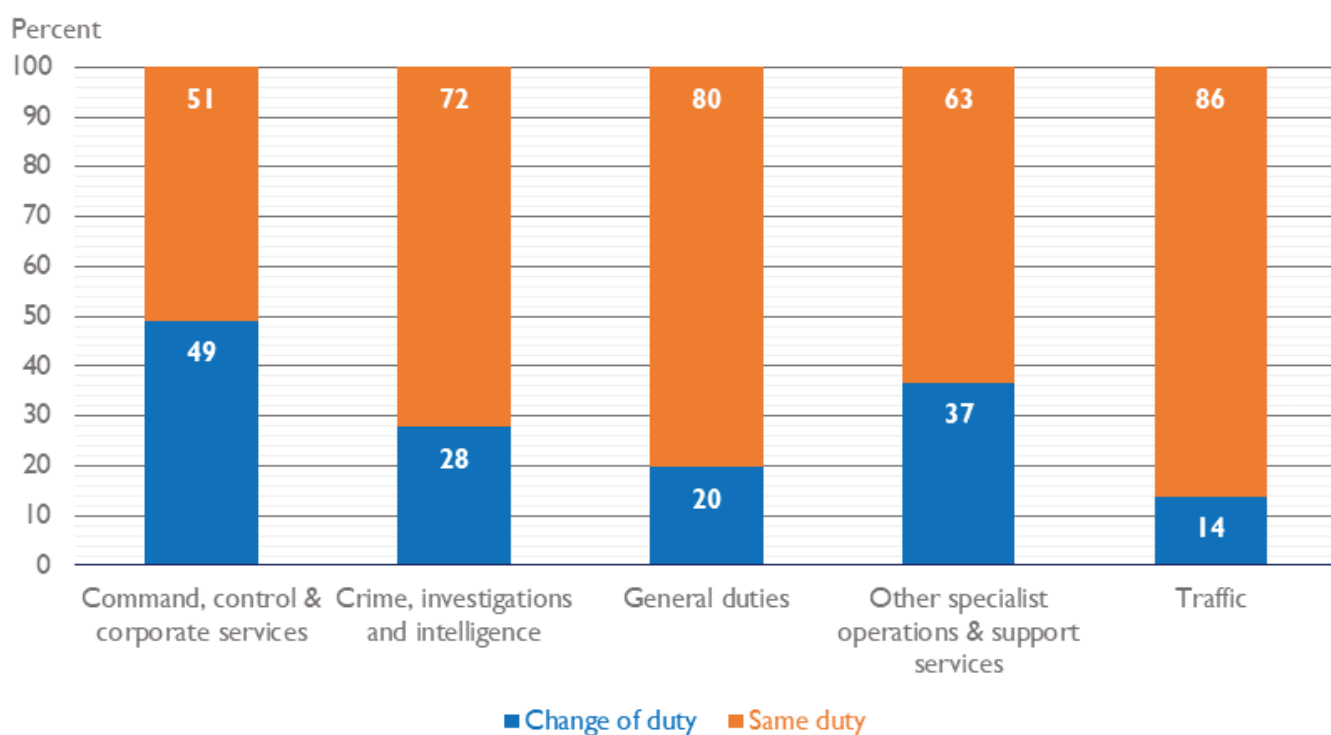
**Chart 13.1 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand changing duties on commencement of FWA, by jurisdiction.**



**Chart 13.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand who changed duties on commencement of FWA, by working hours arrangement.**



**Chart 13.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand who changed duties on commencement of FWA, by duty type.**



When asked specifically whether, since commencing their FWA, there had been a change in the type of roles and duties they were asked to perform, the majority (nearly 62 percent of weighted responses) responded “no”. For those who had changed duty type on commencing an FWA, the reasons for the change were explored. Predominantly these relate to the availability of flexibility (29 percent of Australian police on FWAs), or having no other options (26 percent). Change of duties related to career progression is a factor in about 12 percent, which suggests that FWAs are not inevitably associated with failure to be promoted. In fact, career progression was a much more common reason for change than was the need to reduce on-call, overtime or travel expectations, or pressure from management to change roles.

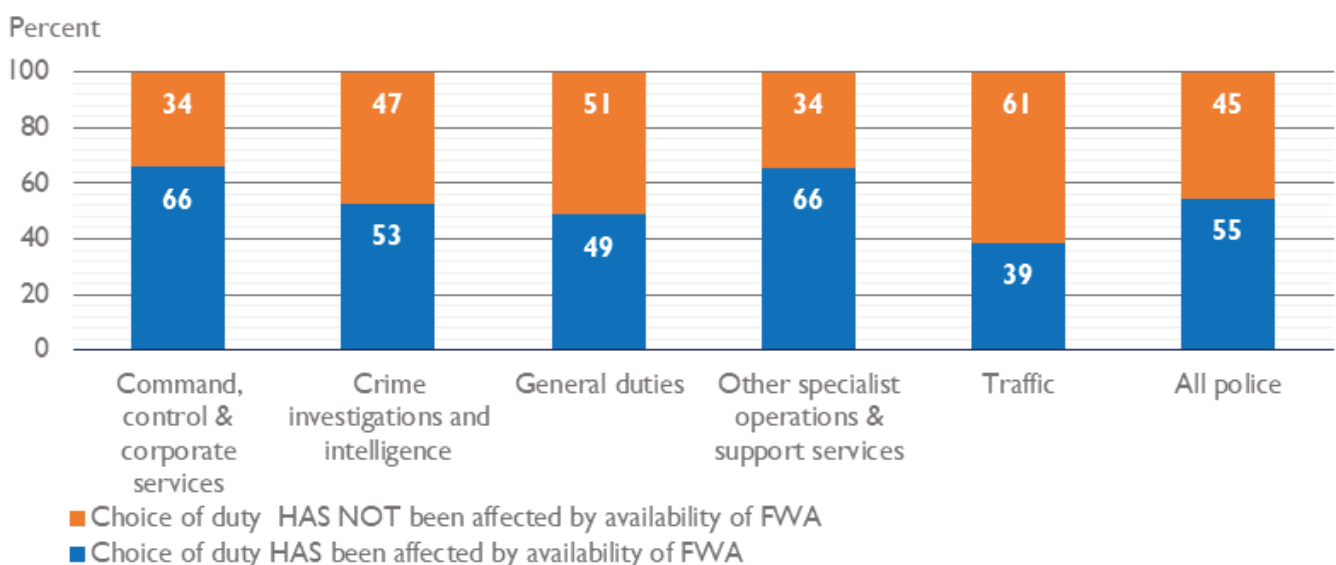
Finally, the same respondents were asked whether their choice of duty had been affected by the availability of FWAs. The survey data indicates that the choice of duty of more than half of all police working FWAs is affected by the availability of FWAs. When the results were analysed in terms of duty type, this appears to confirm that there is a common preference for moving into specialist operations and support services, and (although it is less numerically significant) command, control and corporate services. For crime investigations and intelligence and general duties around half indicated that their choice was affected by the availability of FWAs, whilst for traffic, only about 40 percent of officers chose that role based on considerations of flexibility. This data suggests that police officers who are considering seeking FWAs in the future may be planning their career around this option, possibly well ahead of time. Furthermore, areas within the police force which have found it difficult to adapt their rostering practices and duties to FWAs may in the future have more difficulty attracting or keeping staff.

### What police say about changes in duties

Police were asked to describe the ways in which their work had changed since they began their FWA. Their responses have been coded and thematically analysed. Please refer to the *Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017* for more detail.

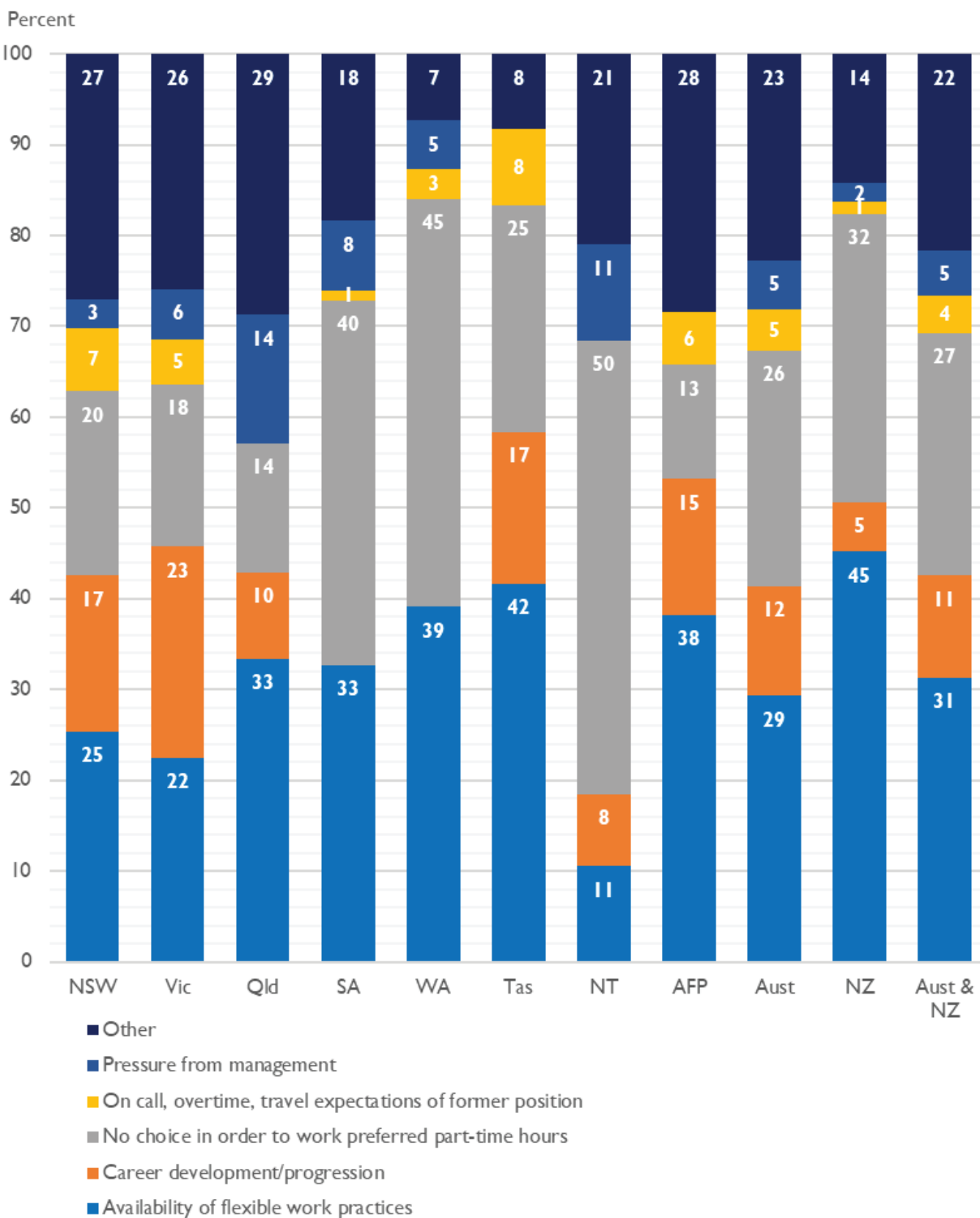
A majority of comments describe reduced roles and limitations in opportunities. Some of these were felt to be inevitable by respondents, whilst some were regarded as unnecessary or unfair. Other police described how their roles had been adapted so that they could work effectively on a FWA, including some who had received a promotion. A few reported being treated as a management problem, experiencing discrimination, or being reallocated, although a significant number voluntarily moved to a different work area or command. Only a few said their role was unchanged.

**Chart 13.4 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs for whom the choice of duty has/has not been affected by the availability of FWAs.**





**Chart 13.5 Proportion (%) of police changing duties on commencement of FWA by reason for change and jurisdiction.**



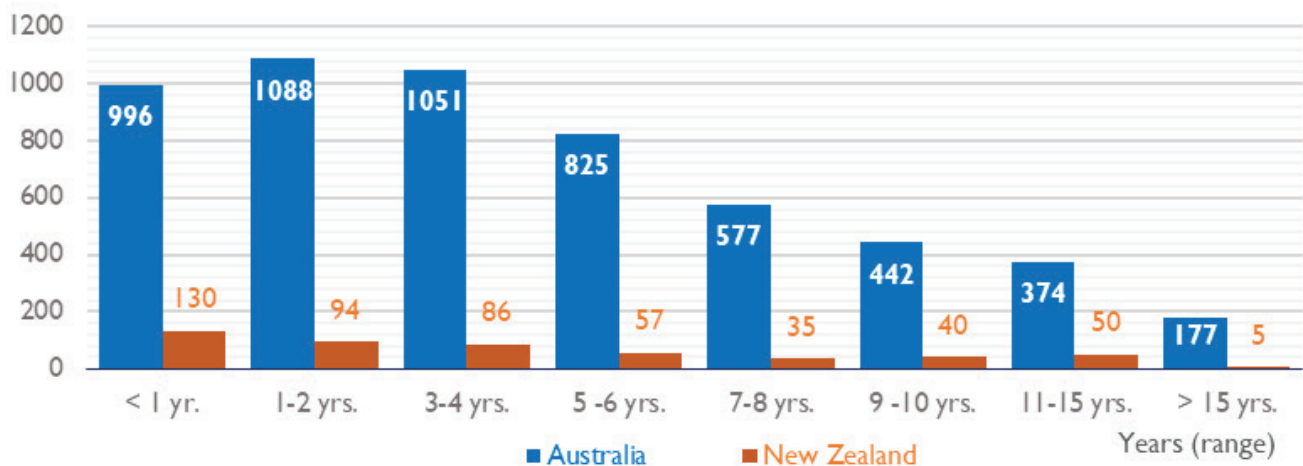
# 14 Duration of flexible working arrangements

Police working with FWAs were asked how long they had been on their current FWA.

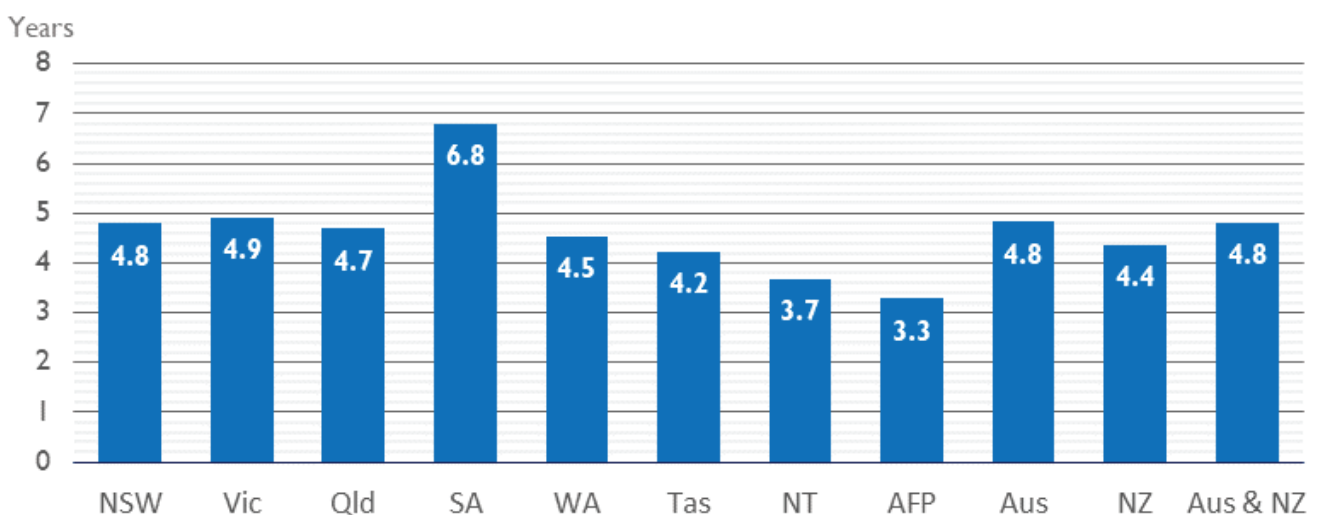
Nationally, the average time on a FWA was just under 5 years, with a range of 3.7 - 6.8 years across the different jurisdictions.

When asked how long they intended to stay on their FWA, the most common response was 3 - 5 years. However, another large group of respondents, representative of a quarter of all police on FWAs, indicated that they intend to stay on their FWA "indefinitely". About 16 percent of police working FWAs were not sure, which may be due to uncertainties in either their work or social situation.

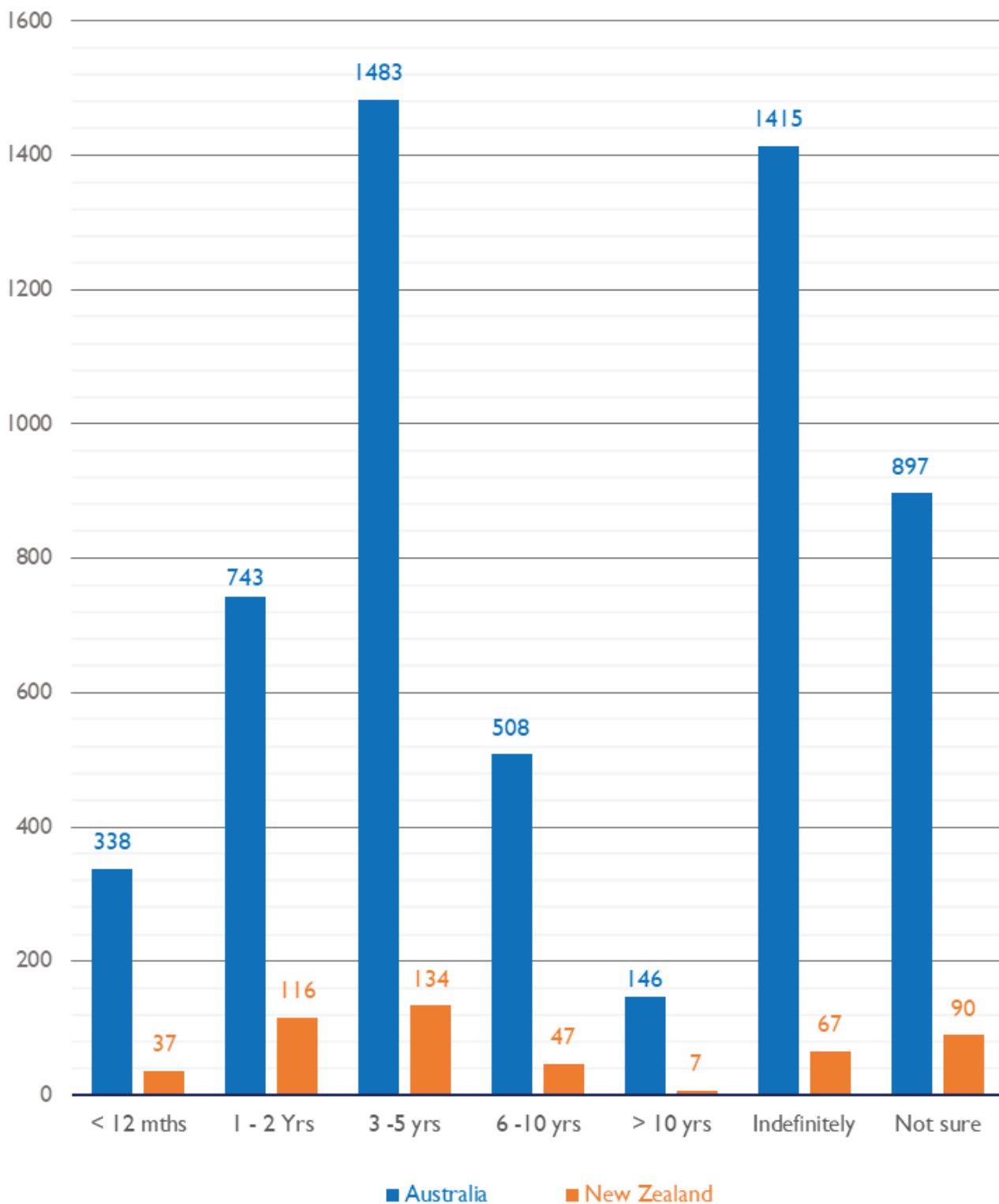
**Chart 14.1 Estimated numbers of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs by duration of current FWA.**



**Chart 14.2 Average duration (years) of current FWA by jurisdiction.**

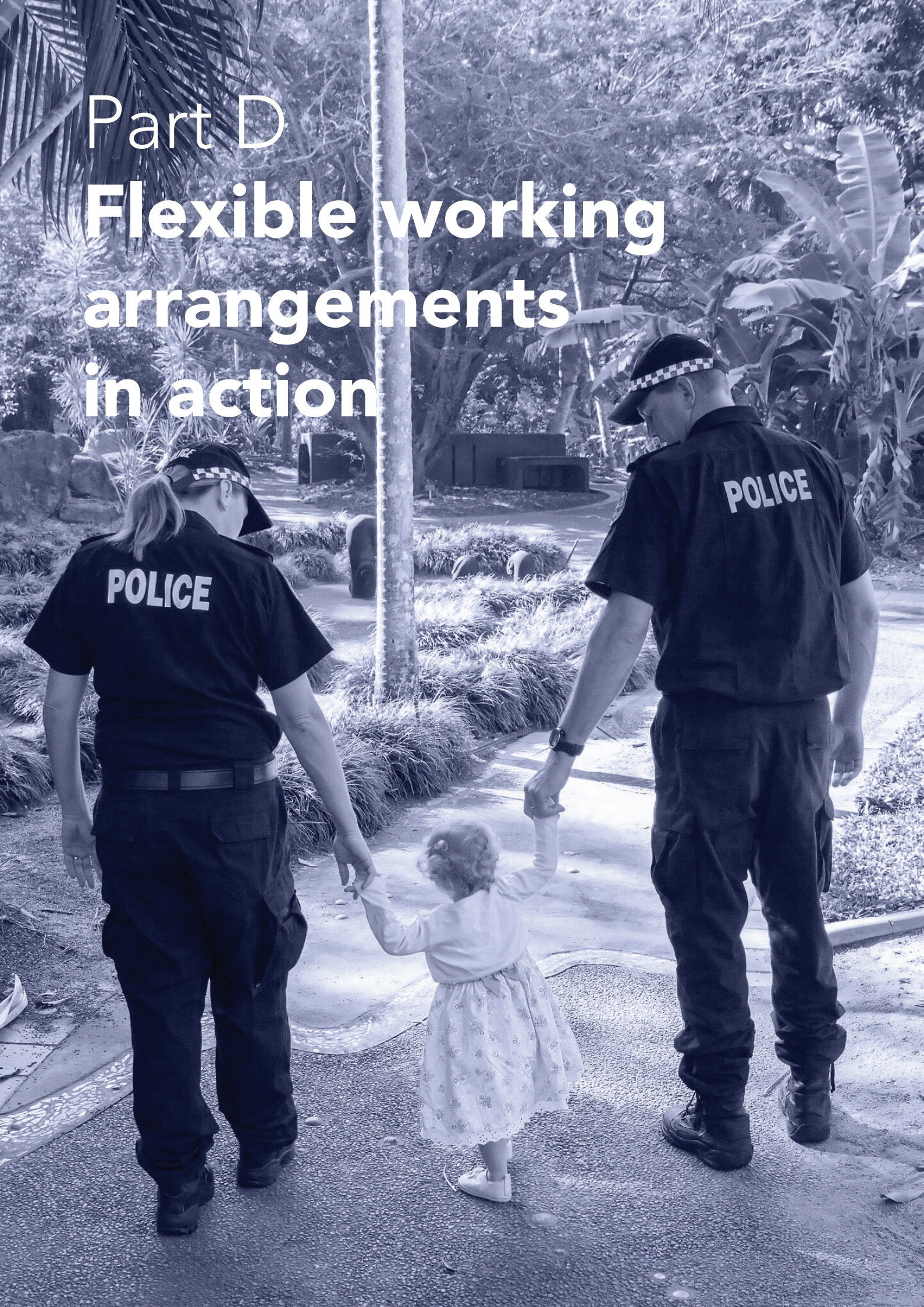


**Chart 14.3 Estimated number of police in Australia & New Zealand by future duration (years) of current FWA.**





Part D  
**Flexible working  
arrangements  
in action**



# 15 Satisfaction with flexible working arrangements

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*Police officers currently working on FWAs were asked, "How satisfied are you with your current flexible working arrangement?" Police were given the choice of five options:*

- *Very satisfied;*
- *Satisfied;*
- *Neutral;*
- *Dissatisfied;*
- *Very dissatisfied.*

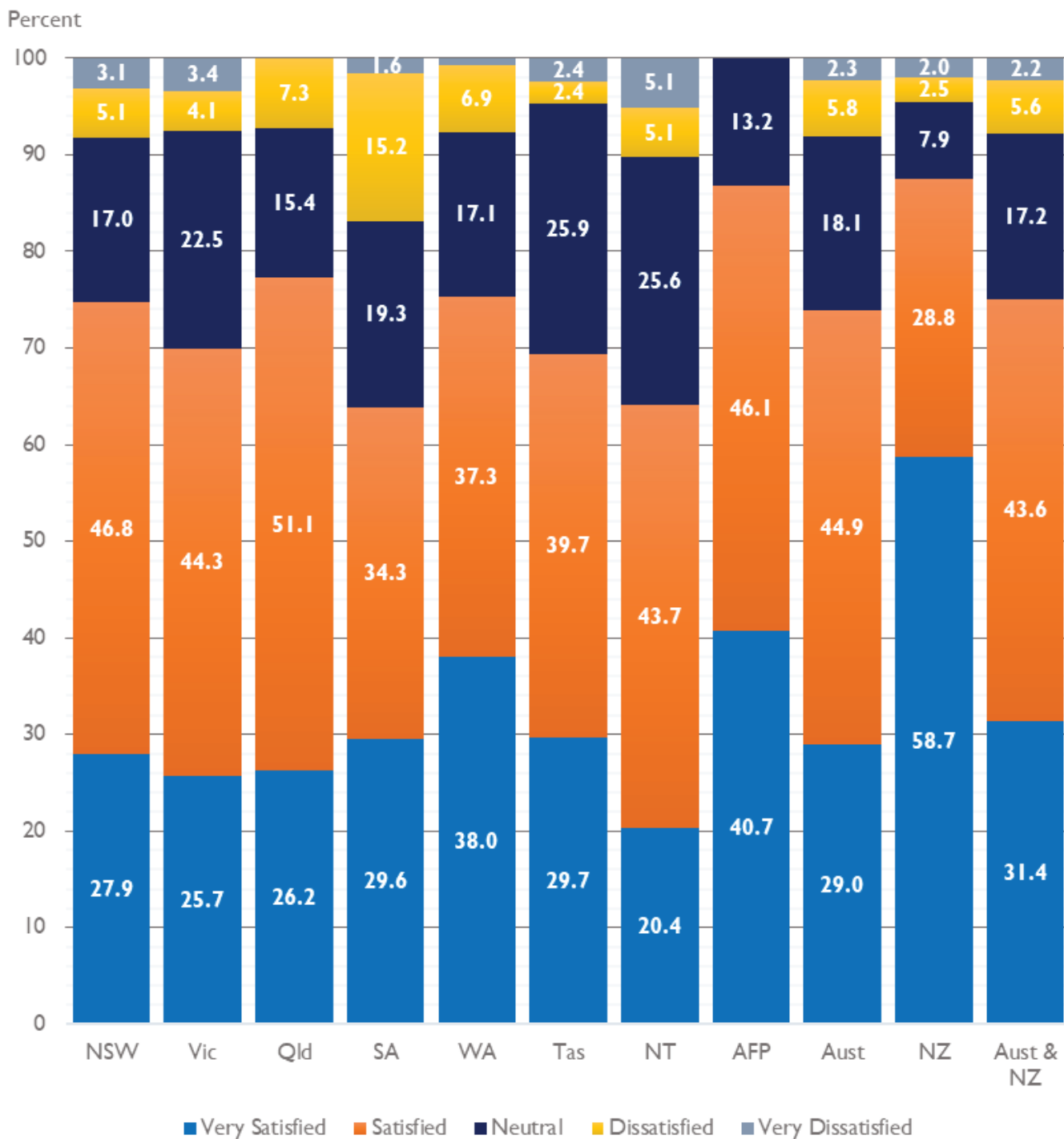
In all jurisdictions, police report high levels of satisfaction with their FWAs. Almost three quarters of Australian officers are satisfied or highly satisfied. So too are 88 percent of New Zealand police.

Satisfaction levels of Australian police vary across jurisdictions, duty type and working hours arrangement. The highest satisfaction levels are recorded by police working on FWAs during normal office hours (compared with rostered shift workers) and those working in headquarters, crime and investigations (compared with special operations, traffic and general duties).

Fully 90 percent of New Zealand and Australian police officers on full-time FWAs working normal weekly office hours are "satisfied" or "very satisfied". Of those working part-time weekly office hours, 79 percent are "satisfied" or "very satisfied". Their colleagues working fixed and rotating rosters report satisfaction rates around 70 percent.

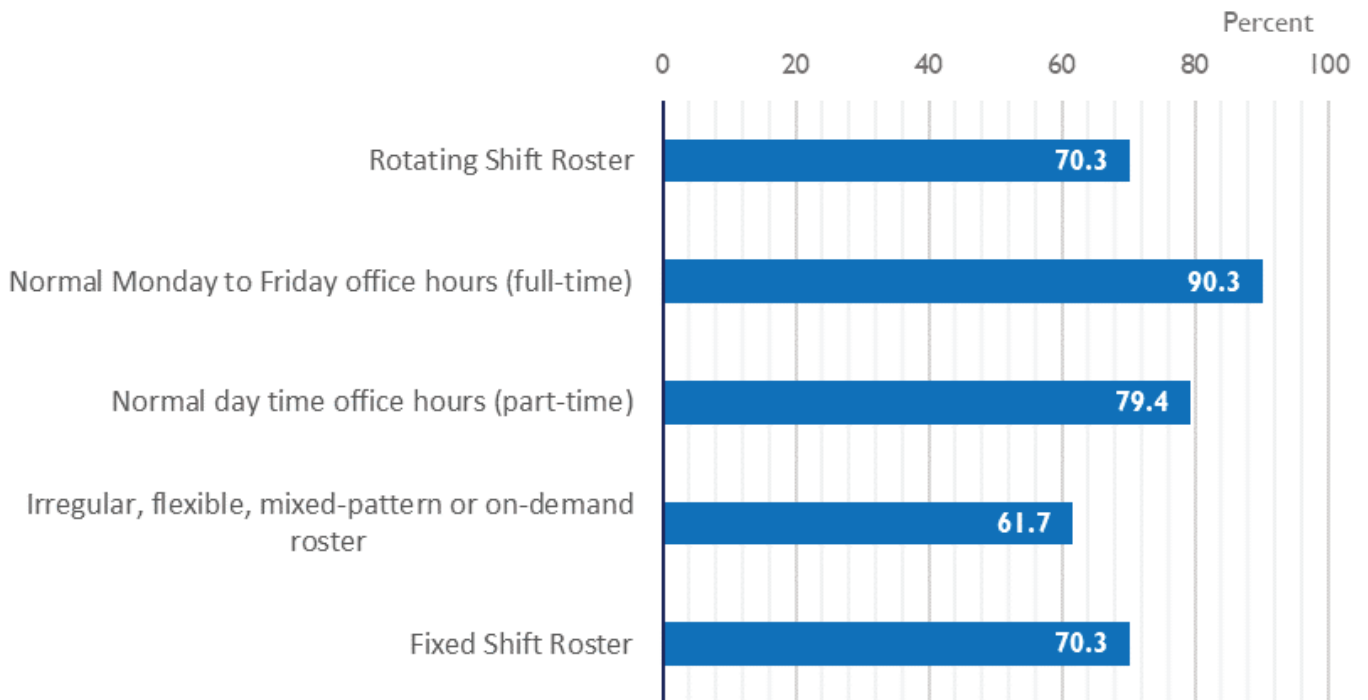
Just under two thirds of officers (64 percent) working in general duties are "satisfied or very satisfied" compared with officers in command and corporate services and crime and intelligence who record satisfaction levels just under 80 percent.

**Chart 15.1 Proportion (%) of police by level of satisfaction with their FWA by jurisdiction.**

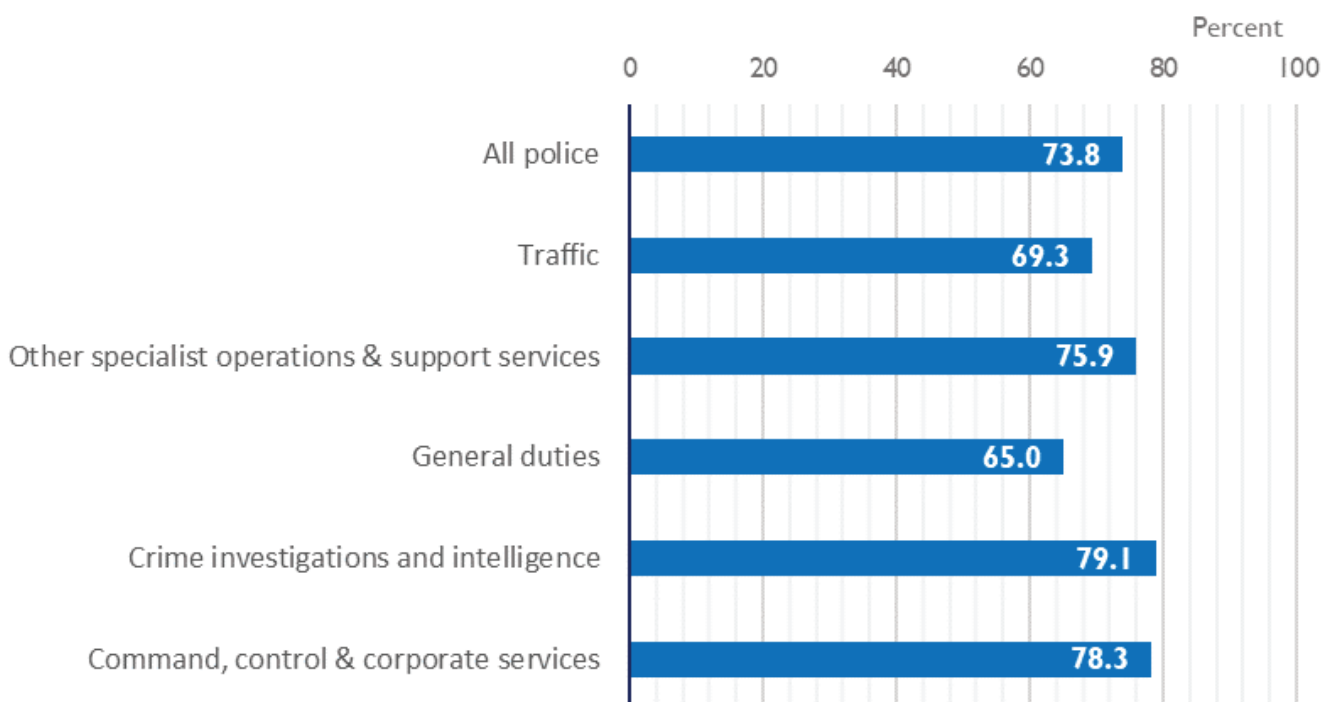




**Chart 15.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand reporting being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their FWA - by roster type.**



**Chart 15.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand reporting being "satisfied" or "very satisfied" with their FWA - by duty type.**





## What police say about their level of satisfaction with FWAs

Police were given the opportunity to make open comments on their level of satisfaction with their FWA. Please refer to the *Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017* for more detail.

The benefits of FWAs are very significant, and access to them is greatly appreciated. According to police two factors are needed to make them work: flexibility from the officer who is on the FWA, and positive support from management, which includes consulting about rostering and duties. According to respondents, for FWAs to work they must be a two-way street.

The positives that flow from FWAs affect family life, as well as staff retention and stress levels. FWAs facilitate return to work for injured or sick officers and provide support for those with family issues, also allowing older officers to manage their transition to retirement.

# 16 Workplace culture and flexible working arrangements

Police were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements indicating their levels of support for work-life balance and flexible working arrangements using a five-point scale which went from strongly agree to strongly disagree and included the option of “Neither agree or disagree”. Responses of those currently on FWAs were compared with those on a regular full-time roster. Differences between jurisdictions were also assessed. See Appendix 1 for information on how net overall agreement and disagreement ratings are calculated. Respondents chose their level of agreement with each of the following ten statements:

- Police officers can move between full-time and part-time work as needed;
- I am able to work part-time/job share if I want;
- Police officers who work flexible work arrangements have the same protection as the full-time workforce (i.e. access to benefits, shifts and wages);
- Police officers who work a flexible work arrangement are provided with the same opportunity to undertake training and apply for promotion as full-time officers;
- Police officers who work a flexible work arrangement are treated no differently to those who are full-time;
- Preferred shift patterns are usually accommodated;
- I have enough flexibility in my hours to take care of my personal needs;
- My employer recognises that police officers have a life outside of work;
- I am happy with existing arrangements supporting work-life balance;
- Employer supports police officers seeking flexible working arrangements.

Almost half of all police are happy with “existing arrangements supporting work-life balance” and think they have enough flexibility in their hours “to take account of personal needs”. But a sizeable minority - roughly a third of all police officers - are unhappy about the way existing work arrangements impact on work-life balance and do not think they have enough flexibility in hours to take account of their personal needs.

- Almost 3 in 5 consider that current arrangements do not allow for officers to move between full-time work and part-time work when needed.
- Just over one half of all police officers disagree that part-time work is available for them personally should they need it, while only 1 in 4 officers agree they can access part-time work.

These two findings suggest significant limitations on the availability of part-time work for police officers. Overall, the results suggest that current arrangements and workplace cultures do not offer strong support for flexibility and work-life balance:

- More than one third of all police do not agree that their “employer recognises they have a life outside of work” and less than two fifths do agree.
- Police are divided over whether preferred shift patterns are usually accommodated, with roughly one third agreeing and slightly more than a third disagreeing.

FWAs offer a recognised framework for individual police officers to negotiate variations to working arrangements in order to meet a range of personal needs. However, the answers to these questions suggest that in many workplaces there are impediments to obtaining FWAs and those police officers working on FWAs encounter a range of consequences:

- Almost 40 percent of all officers do not agree that their employer supports police seeking FWAs, while only 1 in 5 police have a firm view that their employer supports police seeking FWAs.
- Around 40 percent believe that officers on FWAs are not provided with the same opportunity to undertake training and apply for promotion as full-time officers. Opinion on this is divided, with one third believing those on FWAs do have equal opportunities.
- Over half all officers believe those on FWAs are treated differently to regular full-time police.

On a positive note, there is strong net agreement overall among officers with the statement that “police officers that work a FWA are afforded the same level of protection as the full-time workforce (i.e. access to benefits, shifts and wages)”. Around half all police agree that the same levels of protection are enjoyed by those on FWAs, and only one fifth disagree.

Officers who work on FWAs are far more likely to provide responses that are indicative of a supportive workplace culture than their regular full-time colleagues, and the gap between the two groups is significant. Officers on FWAs are in net disagreement with full-time officers with respect to the following statements:

- “My employer supports police officers seeking FWAs” - there is moderate overall net agreement among those on FWAs (+12) versus moderate overall net disagreement (-17) among all police officers.
- “My employer recognises that police officers have a life outside of work” - there is moderate net agreement (+20) among those on FWAs overall versus low overall net disagreement (-5) among all police officers.
- “Preferred shift patterns are usually accommodated” - there is very strong net agreement (+35) among those on FWAs overall versus low overall net disagreement (-5) among all police officers.
- “I am able to work part-time/job share if I want” - there is very strong net agreement (+39) among those on FWAs overall versus strong overall net disagreement (-29) among all police officers.

However officers working on FWAs are likely to be more closely aligned with the views of the entire police force with respect to two important aspects of workplace arrangements:

“Police officers who work a FWA are treated no differently to those who are full-time” - both those on FWAs and all police disagree very strongly, to a similar degree, both having a net disagreement rating of (-39).

“Police officers can move between full-time and part-time work as needed” - both have a net disagreement rating of (-42).

In overall terms, those working on FWAs tend to respond more strongly to the following statements:

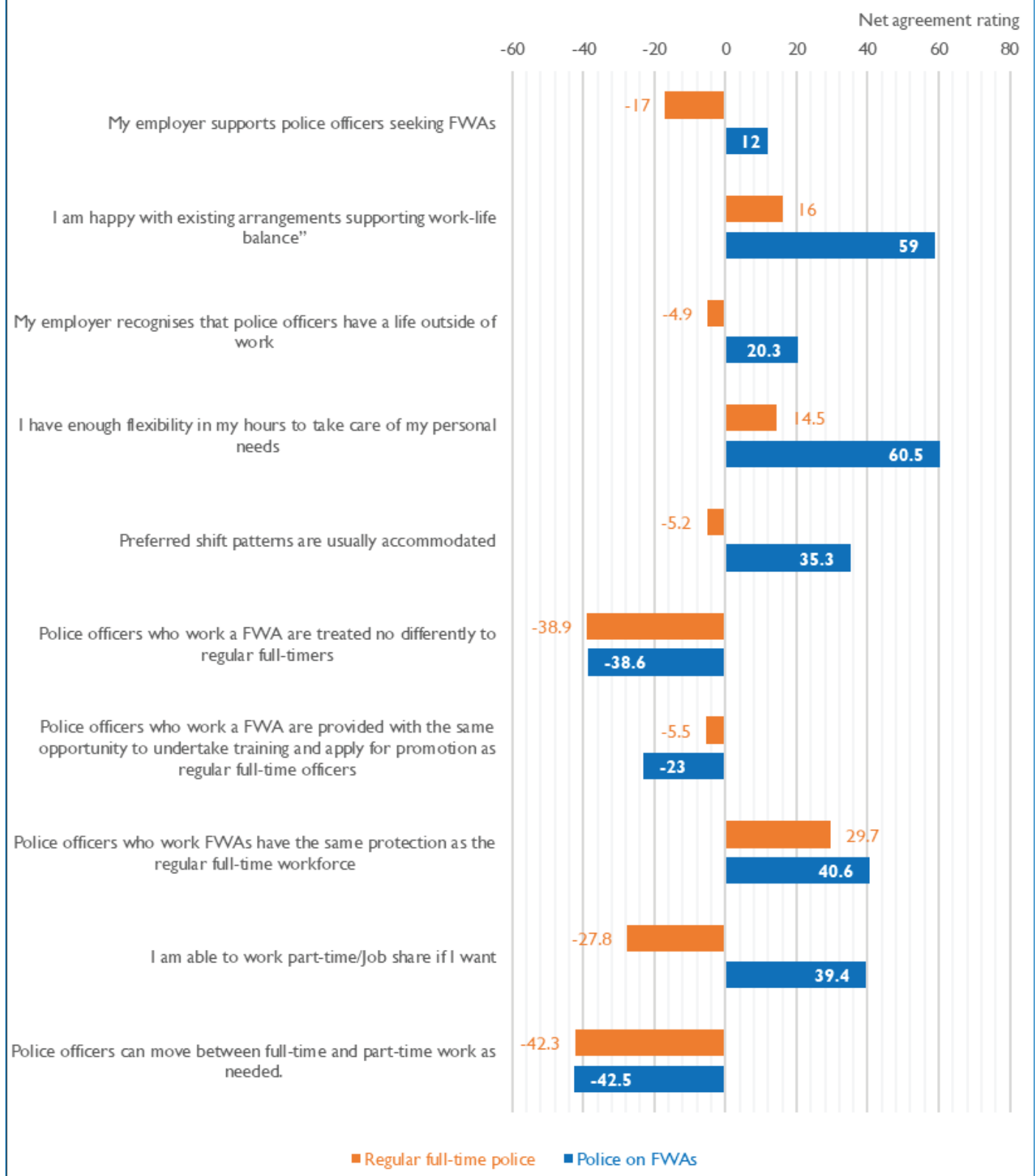
“Police officers who work a FWA are provided with the same opportunity to undertake training and apply for promotion as full-time officers” - overall net disagreement (-23) among those on FWAs versus low net disagreement (-6) across all police officers.

“I am happy with existing arrangements supporting work-life balance” - very strong overall net agreement (+59) among those on FWAs versus moderate net agreement (+16) across all police officers.

“I have enough flexibility in my hours to take care of my personal needs” - very strong overall net agreement (+61) among those on FWAs versus moderate net agreement (+16) across all police officers.

Please refer to *Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017* to view the full charts for this set of questions.

**Chart 16.1 Net overall agreement for police in Australia & New Zealand with statements about workplace culture and FWAs.**



# 17 Impact of flexible working arrangements on workplace and policing

Respondents were asked to agree or disagree with a series of statements concerning various possible impacts of increasing staff flexibility in their work area using a five-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Responses of those currently on flexible working arrangements were then compared with those on a regular full-time roster. Differences between jurisdictions are also quantified. See Appendix 1 for information on how net overall agreement and disagreement ratings are calculated.

Respondents chose their level of agreement with each of the following eight statements about impacts of increased staff flexibility:

- Increased responsibilities for full-time police officers
- Less flexibility afforded to full-time police officers
- Increased requirement for backfilling
- Public safety would be compromised
- Task handling would be more complicated
- Police officers more satisfied leading to better policing outcomes
- Rosters would be harder to manage
- Policing models would need to change

Around 60 percent of all police officers agree that greater flexibility in their workplaces will lead to:

- Increased responsibilities for full-time officers;
- Less flexibility afforded to full-time officers;
- Increased requirements for backfilling; and,
- Rosters being harder to manage.

There is strong net overall agreement rating at around (+40) among all police officers. A clear majority of police agree on these impacts across all jurisdictions. In contrast, opinions are more divided among those officers on FWAs, among whom there is low to moderate overall disagreement that greater flexibility will lead to these impacts.

There is moderate net overall agreement that increased flexibility will lead to more complicated task handling. Around 45 percent of police officers concur that task handling would be more complicated, but 30 percent think not. Comparatively few agree or disagree strongly. Police on FWAs, however, are in strong net overall disagreement that task handling would be more complicated.

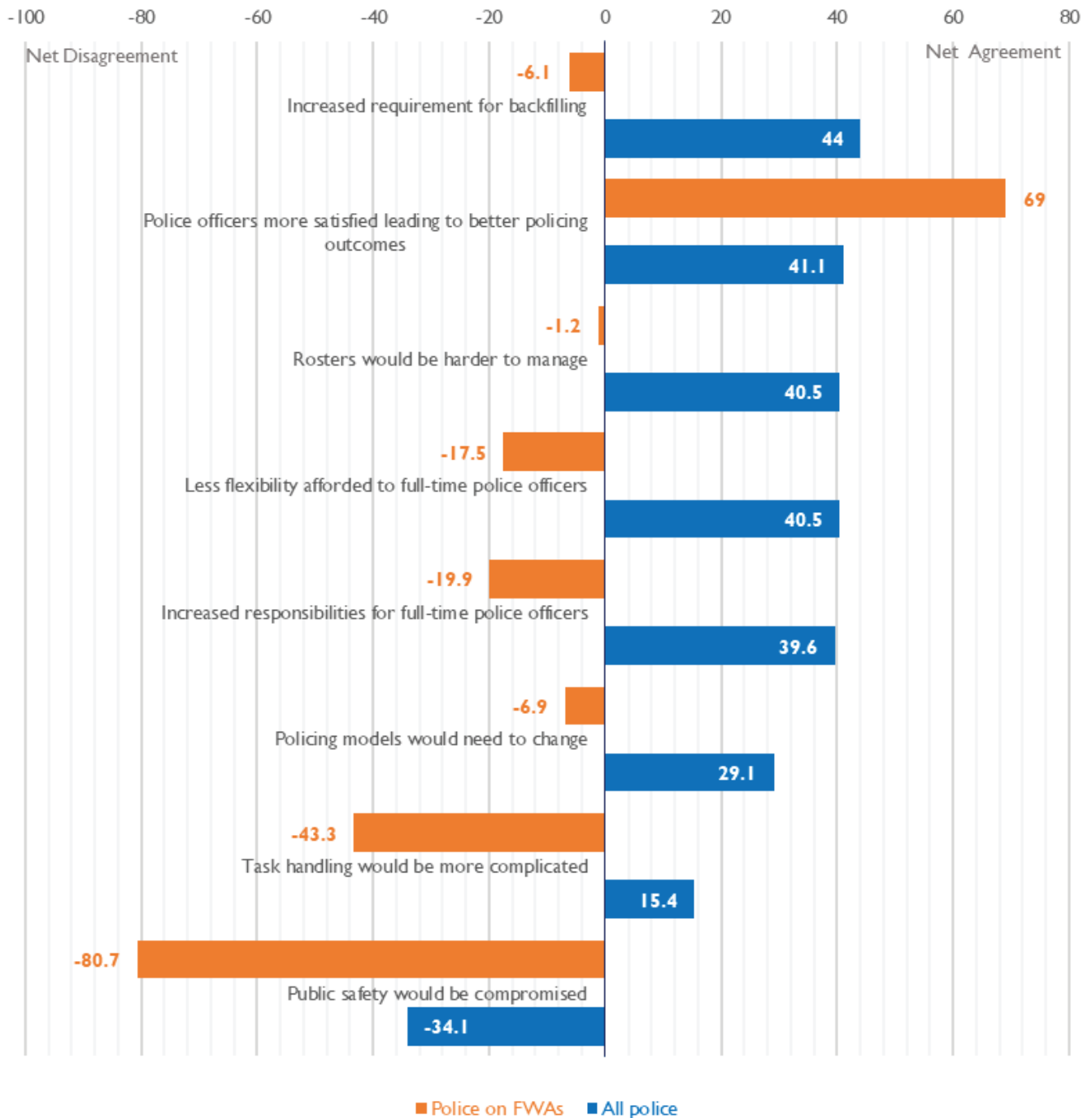
Police officers generally disagree strongly that public safety would be compromised by greater flexibility in the workplace. This is an opinion shared by both regular full-time officers (-29) and those on FWAs (-81). Barely 3 percent of those on FWAs think public safety would be compromised, compared with 17 percent of all police.

Following from these impacts, there is a strong net overall agreement of (+29) among all police officers that policing models would need to change if greater levels of flexibility were to be introduced in their workplaces. About half of all police officers agree that policing models would need to change, while just one fifth disagree. In overall terms, a clear majority of police in all jurisdictions believe policing models would need to change in order to introduce more flexibility arrangements, although the level of net overall agreement varies significantly across jurisdictions.

While police generally believe greater flexibility will have a range of significant negative impacts requiring new policing models, they also strongly agree (+40) that greater flexibility would result in better policing outcomes. More than half all police officers agree that police officers will be more satisfied if greater flexibility is introduced in their workplaces, leading to better policing outcomes, while fewer than 15 percent disagree.

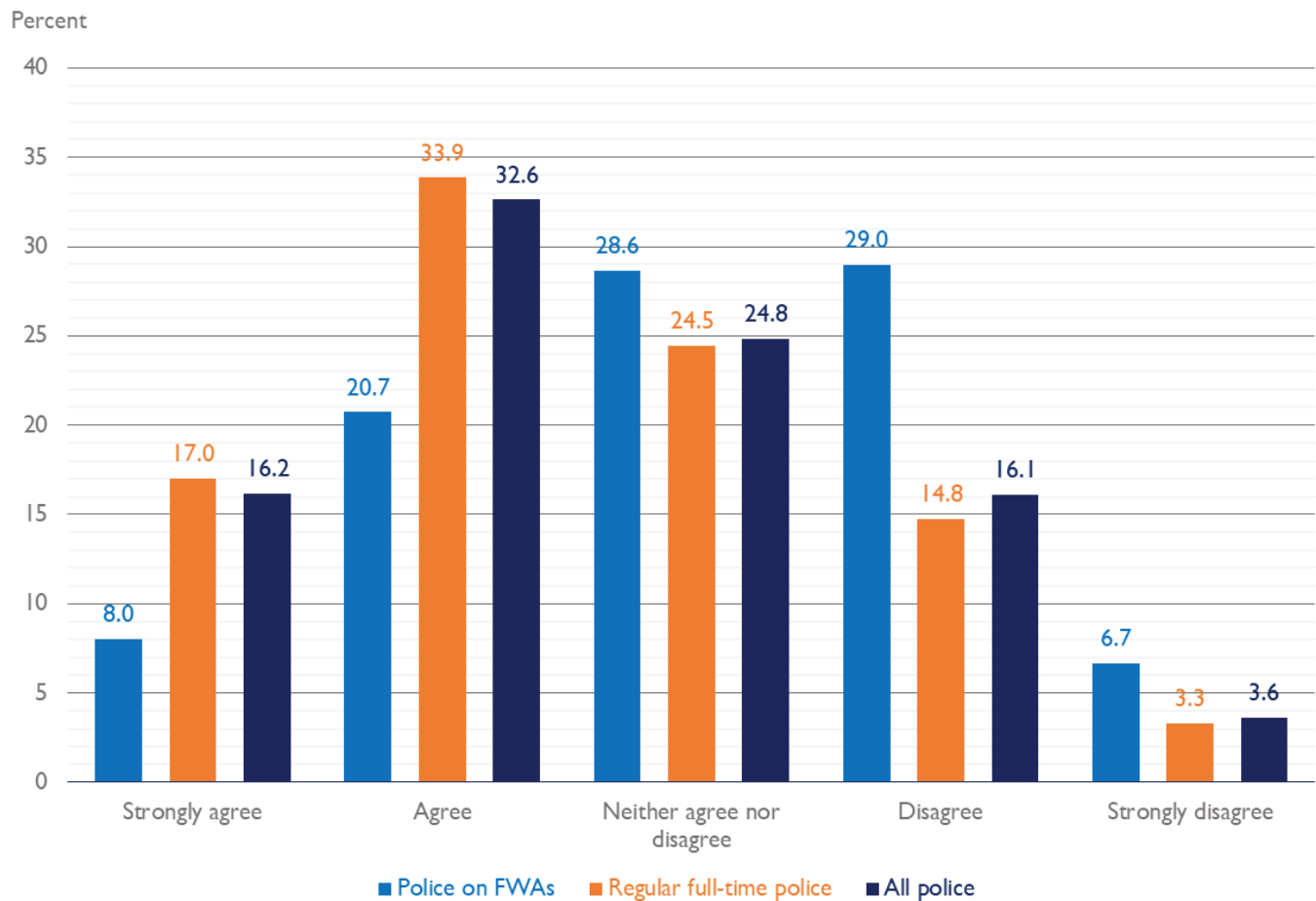


**Chart 17.1 Net agreement ratings for police in Australia & New Zealand with eight statements about the impact of increased staff flexibility on officers' own work areas for a) police on FWAs, b) regular full-time police.**





**Chart 17.2 Distribution of responses of police in Australia & New Zealand to the statement “Policing models would need to change” for a) police on FWAs b) regular full-time police and c) all police. Proportions (%) of police selecting each option.**



# 18 Barriers to implementing flexible working arrangements

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Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent each of ten factors represented a significant barrier to the implementation of FWAs. Respondents were asked to select one of three closed options: “major barrier”, “minor barrier”, or “not a barrier”.

The ten possible barriers to implementing FWAs listed in the survey were:

- Level of difficulty in backfilling positions;
- Level of difficulty in supervising officers working FWAs;
- Loss of productivity;
- Need to treat all officers equally;
- Abuse of policy by some officers;
- Setting of precedents for other officers that are difficult to accommodate;
- Current policing models cannot accommodate FWAs;
- Perceptions of FWAs being unfair on full-time staff;
- Attitudes of management;
- Attitudes of colleagues.

The attitudes of management are considered the most significant barrier to implementing FWAs. More than half all police officers consider the attitudes of management a major barrier to implementing FWAs. Only 9 percent do not consider management attitudes to be a barrier.

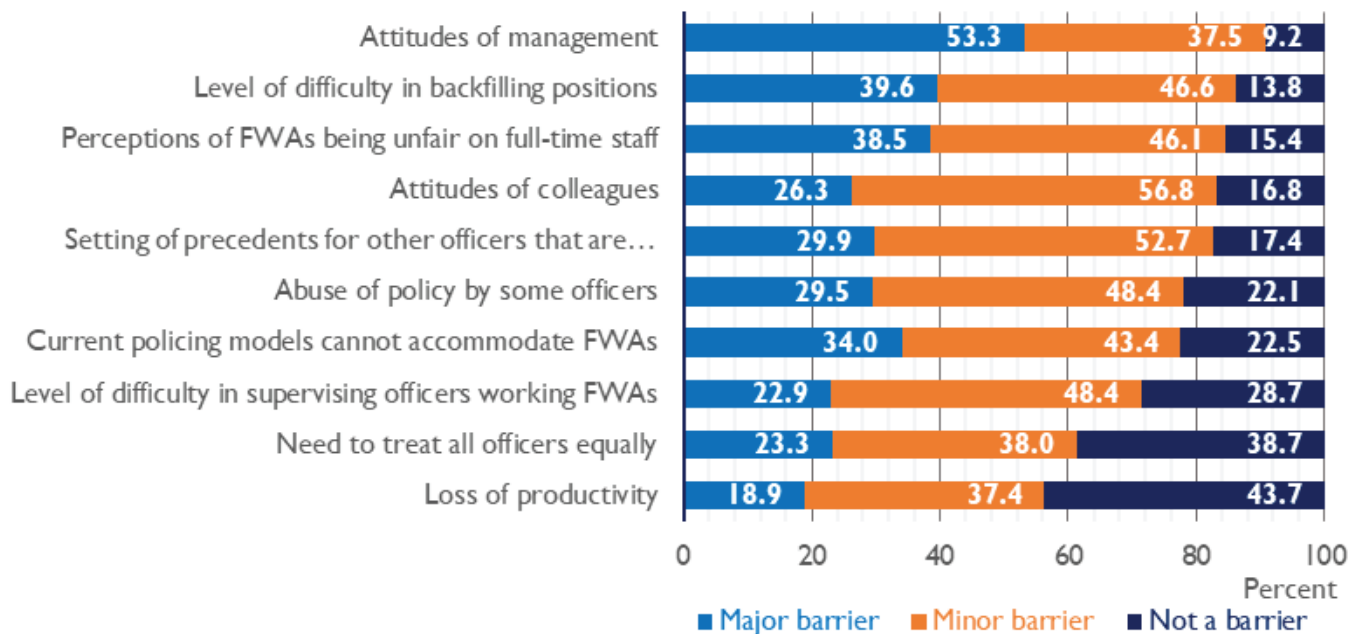
Around 2 in every 5 police officers rate the perception that FWAs are unfair to full-time staff, and difficulty in backfilling positions, as major barriers. Conversely, 60 percent do not think these factors represent major barriers and 15 percent rate them as providing no barrier at all.

Between one quarter and one third of all officers consider attitudes of colleagues, the setting of precedents for other officers that are difficult to accommodate, and the abuse of policy by some officers, to be major barriers to the implementation of FWAs. Between two thirds and three quarters of all police officers consider these only minor barriers or no barrier.

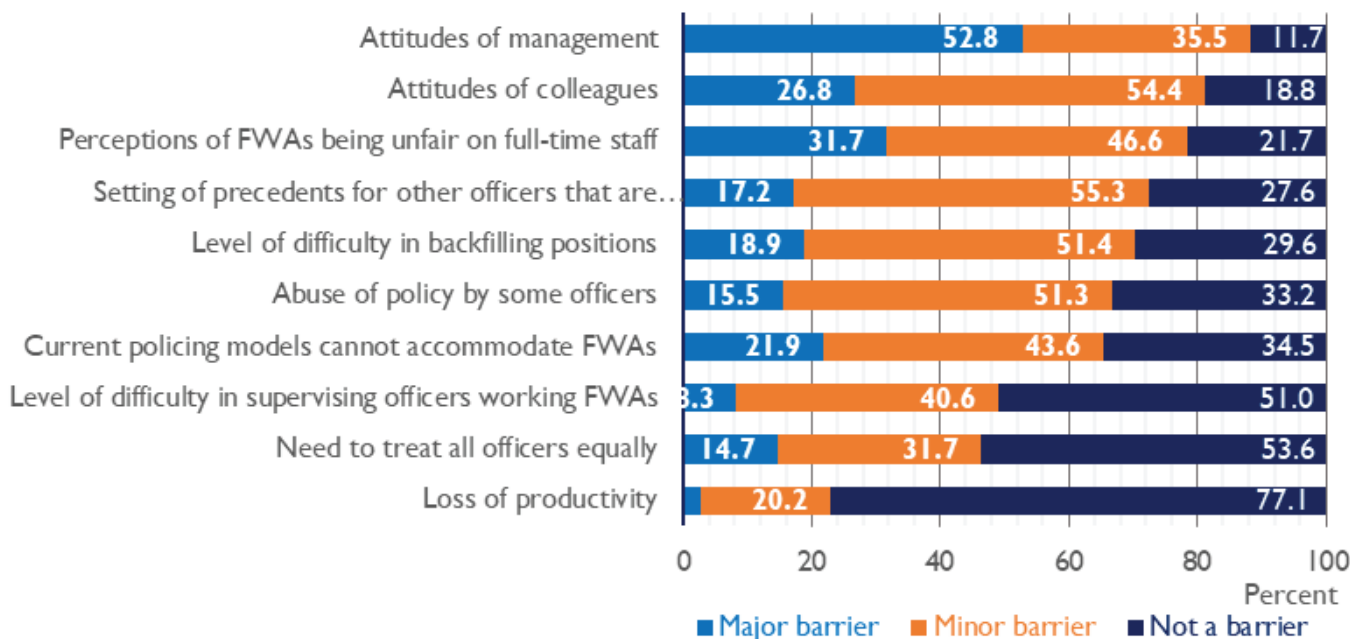
Just less than one quarter of all police officers rate the level of difficulty in supervising officers working FWAs and the need to treat all officers equally as major barriers. In the latter case, almost 40 percent regard this factor as being no barrier at all.

Loss of productivity is not regarded as a significant barrier by most police officers – less than 1 in 5 officers rate this factor as a major barrier and more than 2 in every 5 officers regard it as no barrier at all.

**Chart 18.1 Potential barriers to implementing FWAs: Proportion (%) of all police in Australia & New Zealand rating each as a) a major barrier b) a minor barrier or c) not a barrier”.**



**Chart 18.2 Potential barriers to implementing FWAs: Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand on FWAs rating each as a) a major barrier b) a minor barrier or c) not a barrier”.**

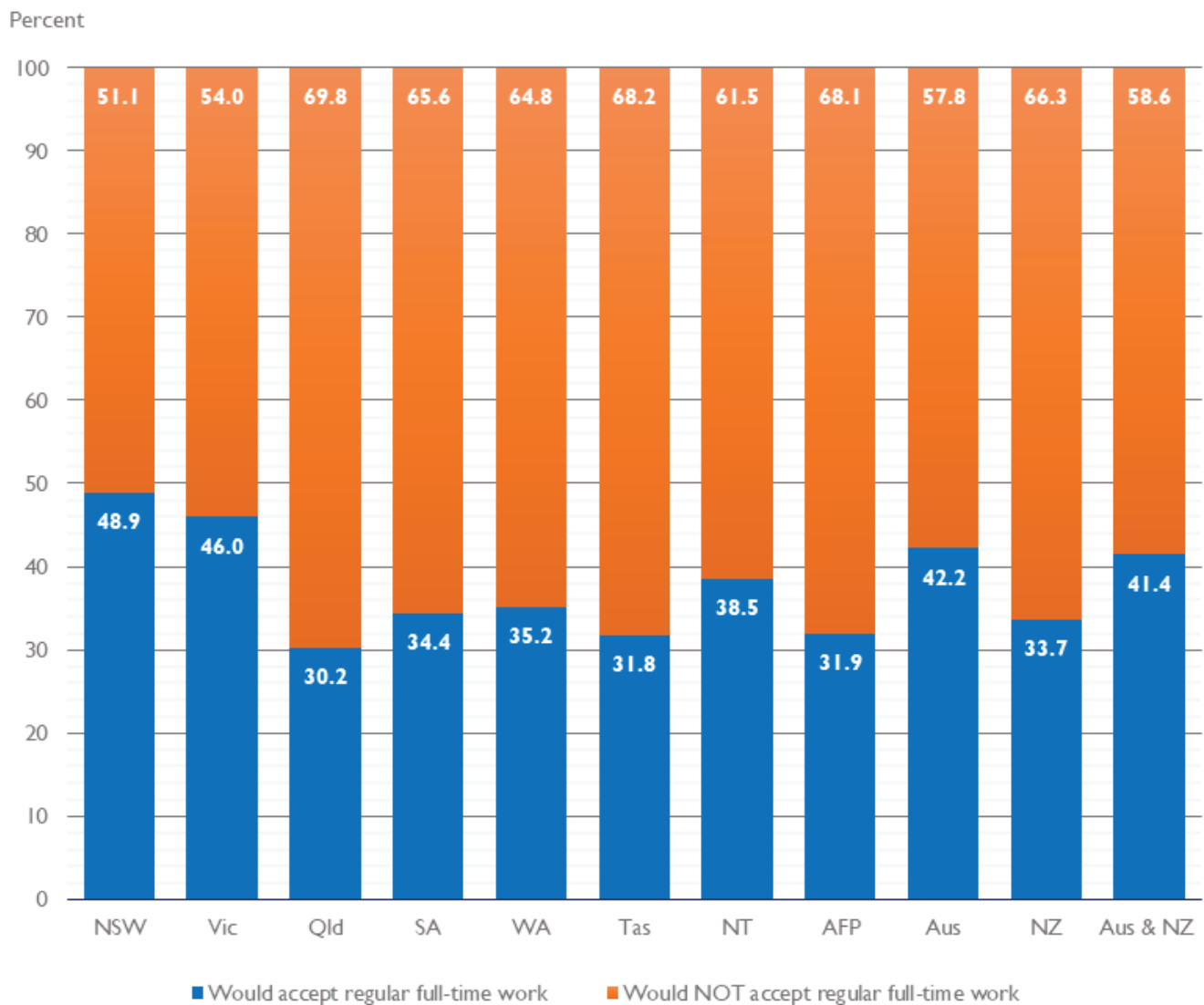


# 19 Childcare needs and the demand for flexible working arrangements

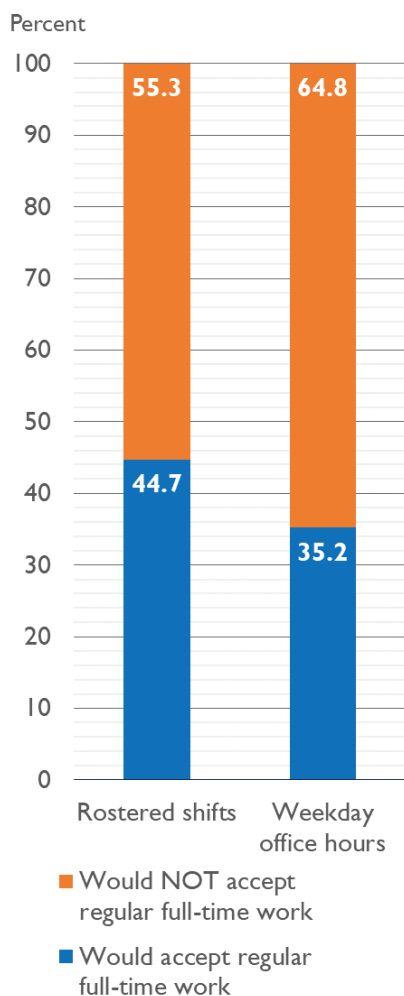
Respondents with flexible working arrangements were asked the question “Would you have accepted (regular) full-time work if you had other viable childcare options such as 24 hour childcare providers or subsidised home-based care”

Of those currently on FWAs for parenting, 42 percent would consider returning to regular full-time work if appropriate 24/7 childcare was available.

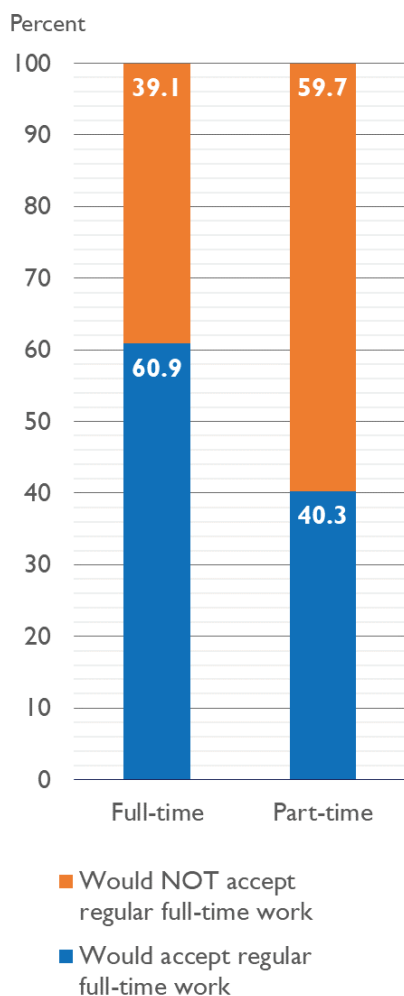
**Chart 19.1 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand currently on FWAs who would have accepted a regular full-time position if other viable childcare options had been available such as 24 hour childcare providers or subsidised home-based care.**



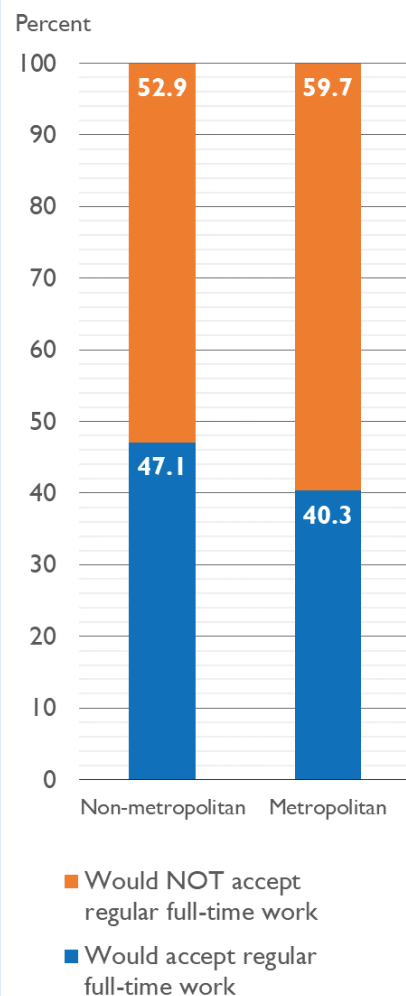
**Chart 19.2 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand currently on FWAs who would have accepted a regular full-time position if other viable childcare options had been available for police working a) rostered shifts and b) normal office hours.**



**Chart 19.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand currently on FWAs who would have accepted a regular full-time position if other viable childcare options had been available for police on a) full-time FWAs and b) part-time FWAs.**



**Chart 19.4 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand currently on FWAs who would have accepted a regular full-time position if other viable childcare options had been available for a) metropolitan police and b) non-metropolitan police.**



Childcare responsibilities are a major reason for the requirement for FWAs. Severe difficulties in accessing affordable and appropriate childcare limits the workplace participation of parents, predominantly women. The data shows that for many parents unpredictable rosters and shifts are extremely difficult to manage, and their reduced ability to contribute when there are unanticipated demands is a key cause of conflict in the workplace. The survey data demonstrates clearly many issues for parents managing childcare whilst in the police workforce:

- There is inflexibility in paid childcare and a mismatch in the times of availability of care compared with police rosters;
- The cost of childcare which can cover extended hours, or of home based options such as nannies, is prohibitive, and the impact of extended time in care for children is a concern for many parents;
- The needs of school age children change, but do not decrease;
- Officers in regional areas may have limited options for care and limited family support;
- Single and divorced parents can experience particularly high levels of stress as they try to negotiate their caring roles within their workplaces.

The qualitative survey data demonstrates an evolving pattern amongst police couples of planning their childcare and future careers together. In many police couples both men and women anticipate using FWAs, so that they can share the responsibilities of caring for their children.



# 20 Access to training

*Respondents who are currently working FWAs were asked “Do you think that working a flexible working arrangement has lessened your access to training opportunities” Respondents were also given the opportunity to submit open commentary on the question.*

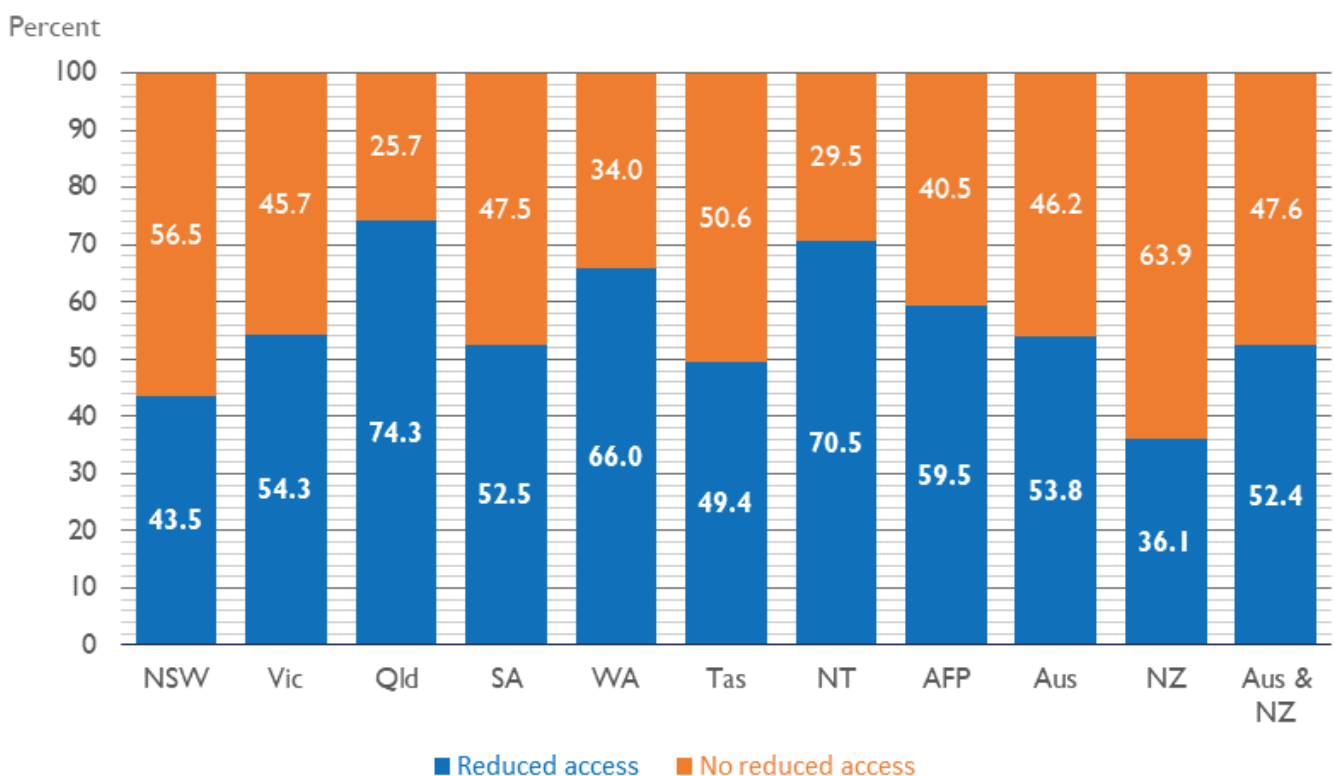
Just over half of all Australian police on FWAs think their access to training opportunities has been reduced because of the FWA. A significant proportion experience reduced access in every jurisdiction, but the impact varies between jurisdictions.

Access varies with gender, rank, type of police duty and hours worked. A greater proportion of:

- Female officers (58 percent) than male officers (38 percent);
- Constables (56 percent) than sergeants (40 percent);
- Police working general duties (64 percent) compared with police working other duty types (49 percent); believe their access to training opportunities has been reduced because of their FWA.

Around 70 percent of Australian part-time female constables working in general duties experience reduced access to training.

**Chart 20.1 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand currently on FWAs who think that working on an FWA has reduced their access to training, by jurisdiction.**





## What police say about access to training

*Police on flexible working arrangements were asked for their comments on the question “Do you think that working a flexible working arrangement has lessened your access to training opportunities?” Their responses have been coded and thematically analysed and can be read in more detail in **Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017**.*

### Being overlooked for training

*“It is like I am invisible”*

Many respondents reported substantial issues with accessing training opportunities. They believe that as they are not regular full-timers they are consistently overlooked. Some of these respondents have “given up” applying for training.

### No lack of training for some

*“Able to access everything I have needed”*

Other respondents say they can access training. However, even if eligible and able to attend, part-timers face disadvantages in being able to compete for a place.

### Barriers faced by part-timers

*“No training takes part-time workers into consideration”*

The main challenge, mentioned by the majority of respondents, is the fact that most training activities are run full-time, often over a period of a week or longer, and sometimes in another city or state. This presents significant challenges for those with parenting responsibilities who may not be able to access additional childcare for that period. The challenge of needing to be away from home for training puts some respondents at a very real disadvantage, especially when compared with those without family responsibilities.

### Childcare issues

*“Only attend training days when my husband is not working”*

Many of those who can participate are willing to be flexible, and a range of strategies are mentioned, including: partner taking leave to provide extra care; changing or increasing hours for the duration; and, attending courses in own time.

However, despite being willing to be flexible, these respondents still need to re-organise childcare and other family responsibilities which may not have much flexibility, and so are not always able to participate. The need for enough notice of training was mentioned as an important factor by several respondents.

### Not supported by managers

*“Was advised I shouldn’t bother applying”*

Managers may not allow roster changes, or may be unwilling to pay for the additional hours required. There is considerable variation in management approaches reported by respondents.

Some respondents are told that as they work reduced hours, they are not able to do training.

### Workload and managing priorities

*“I’m at work less so I feel guilty if doing courses”*

Workload issues affect ability to take up training opportunities for some respondents, particularly those with reduced hours who still carry a very significant load at work, and who have parental responsibilities.

Others are aware of the staffing pressures in their work area and are therefore reluctant to apply for training, whilst sometimes part-timers are used to cover for full-timers who are doing training.

Active consideration of the needs of part-timers for training is greatly appreciated when it occurs, but does not seem to be a common practice.

Respondents suggested several strategies that could increase their access to training. These include breaking up courses into smaller modules which are run over a longer period, with more flexible access for part-timers, more use of online training, and ensuring adequate notice of courses to allow respondents to organise changes to their childcare arrangements.

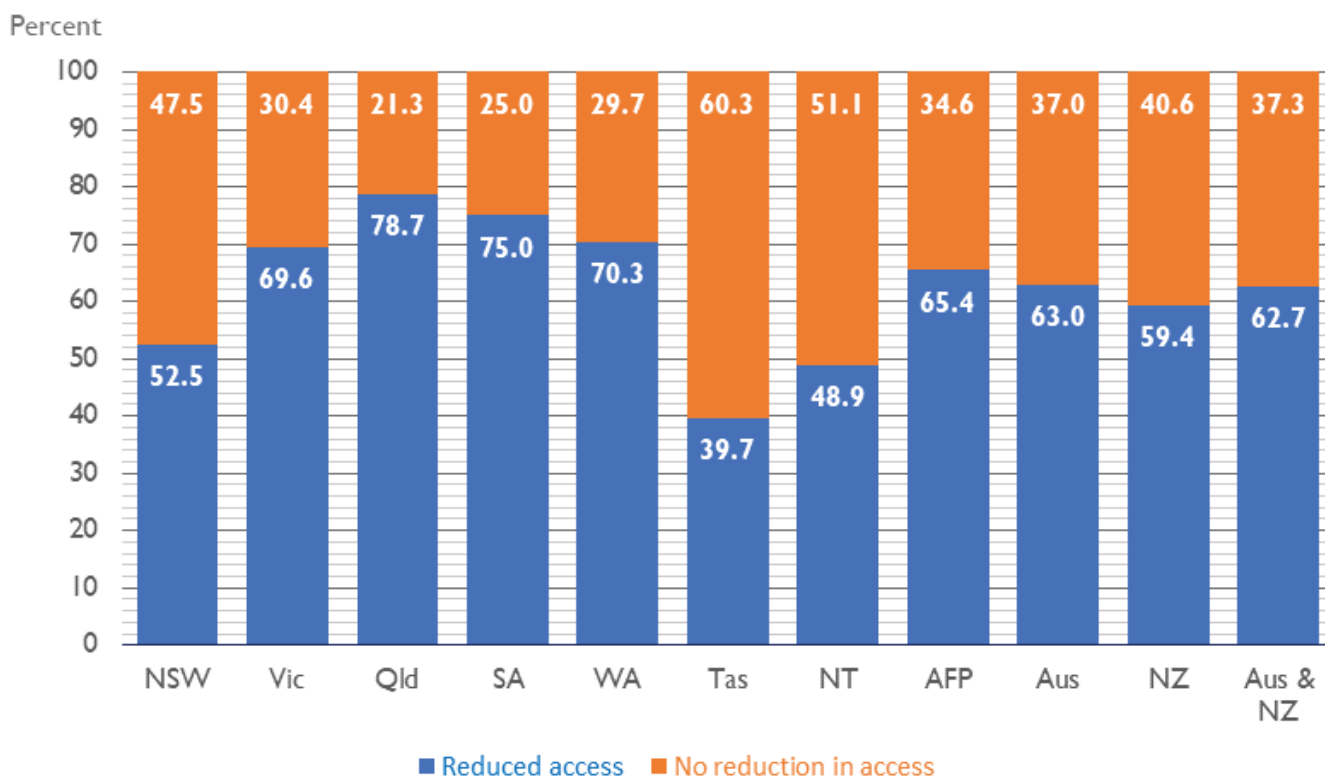
# 21 Access to promotion

*Police working under flexible working arrangements were asked “Do you think that working a FWA has reduced your access to promotion?” They were also given the opportunity to submit open text commentaries.*

More than 3 out of every 5 Australian police (63 percent) believe they have reduced access to promotional opportunities due to working FWAs. New Zealand’s rates are similar (59 percent).

For those working on FWAs, reduced access to promotion is an issue in every jurisdiction. Australian data shows that female officers in this group are more disadvantaged than males: 67 percent of women on FWAs believe they have reduced access to promotional opportunities versus 46 percent of men. Those police officers working on part-time FWAs are also more effected than those working on full-time FWAs (66 percent versus 40 percent). Almost 70 percent of officers on part-time fixed rosters believe they have reduced access to promotion. Compared to other types of police duty, a lower proportion of traffic police (45 percent) believe they have reduced access to promotion.

**Chart 21.1 Proportion (%) of police currently working an FWA who think that working on an FWA has reduced their access to promotion, by jurisdiction.**



## What police say about access to promotion

Respondents on FWAs were asked for their comments on the question "Do you think working a FWA has reduced your access to promotion?". Their responses have been coded and thematically analysed and can be read in "Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017". Below is a summary of the main issues raised.

### Exclusion from promotional opportunities

*"Management don't upgrade part-timers"*

The majority of respondents suggested that their promotion opportunities are reduced to such a degree that they do not consider promotion possible.

Some respondents say that it is simply not worth trying, and they have given up. Many also commented on the fact that senior positions are rarely advertised as part-time.

### Factors affecting the ability to apply for promotion

*"The chances of being successful are almost nil"*

Whilst some respondents described the process by which it is possible for them to apply for a full-time position, and request that it be converted to part-time, most also felt that to do so would make their application uncompetitive.

There is a consensus amongst respondents that full-timers receive preference for promotional positions.

### Choosing to step aside

*"That's the sacrifice I have made to be a good mum"*

The option of career progression is still available for those who are willing to sacrifice their FWA, however many respondents are either not able or not willing to do so. They are very aware that their FWAs put them on a different career path from many of their colleagues who are pursuing promotion, and some have made that choice consciously.

### Limited opportunities

*"You feel a bit like a spare part"*

Many respondents are aware that their reduced availability places a limit on their capacity to undertake certain types of training, roles and responsibilities. This is particularly the case for people working very reduced hours, in which case it is generally accepted as inevitable.

Others report discrimination against them if they need or wish to continue on a FWA regardless of the hours they work. Many respondents report that no consideration is given to whether these duties could in fact be managed differently to create an opportunity for the person on a FWA.

Some report that the work they are offered as part-timers is so restricted that they are unable to progress their career.

### Barriers and discrimination

*"Discrimination I have experienced whilst undertaking the senior management promotions process has been overt"*

There are significant administrative barriers to moving up the ladder which effectively discriminate against those on FWAs.

Respondents comment on the fact that their experience, which is often substantial, is overlooked, whilst people very junior to them are offered promotional opportunities.

Others believe they may have become de-skilled.

### **Under-utilisation of part-timers**

*"I have diverse experience yet I am not mentored to even be given the chance"*

There is generally an absence of role models, and little support and encouragement for those on FWAs to maintain their skills, or seek promotion.

### **Roles that are not suitable for part-time**

*"If you choose to climb rank you should be prepared to do it at full-time"*

Some respondents identify roles that are unable to be adapted in any way. These considerations are a barrier to promotion to roles, especially supervisory or frontline roles.

### **Signs of improvement**

*"I'm not saying it is impossible but it is incredibly difficult"*

The barriers faced by those on FWAs can be overcome by some respondents, however the process is often time-consuming and not straightforward.

Nonetheless, some respondents comment that things are beginning to improve, and those on FWAs are receiving encouragement to progress their career. Some of the variability relates to the practices of individual managers.

# 22 Bullying and victimisation

*Respondents employed on FWAs were asked, "Have you ever suffered from victimisation or bullying as a result of your FWA?" and given options of answering "Yes", "No" or "Prefer not to say".*

Australian police on FWAs experience high rates of victimisation or bullying because of their FWA. At least 3 in every 10 have experienced some form of victimisation or bullying. Most significantly, this is widespread and generalised across jurisdictions, gender, locations, affects both full-time and part-time employees, all types of duty and all ranks below commissioned officers.

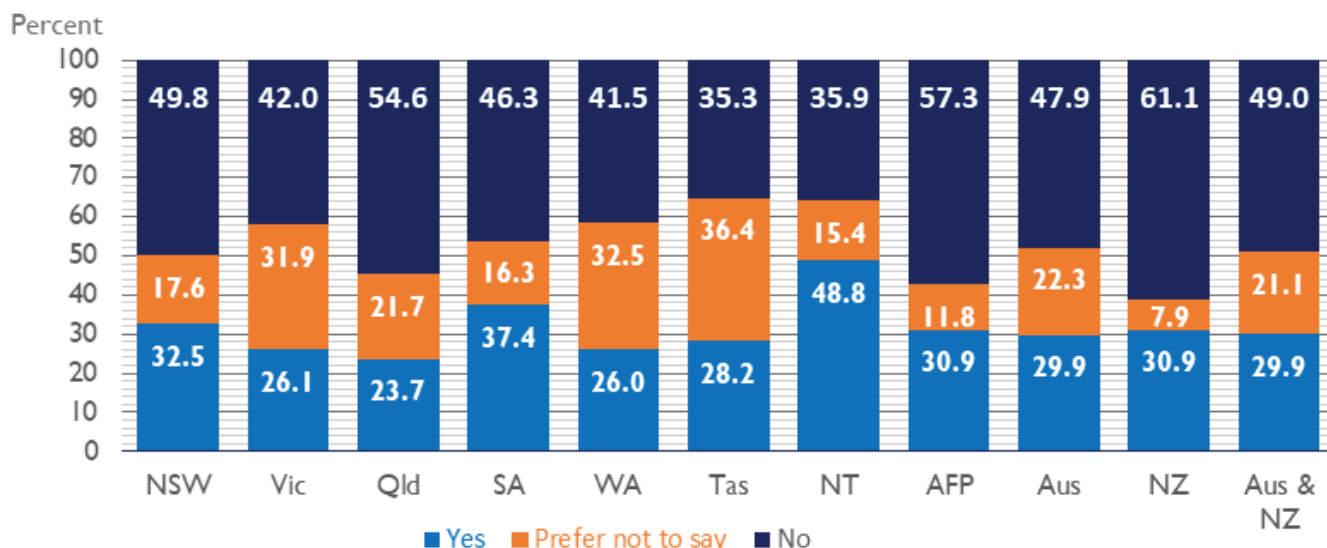
The estimated 30 percent having experienced victimisation or bullying is conservative, based on the number answering "No" to this question. It is likely that those responding "Prefer not to say" may have also been bullied.

There are no large and significant differences in levels of bullying between:

- Metropolitan and non-metropolitan locations;
- Traffic, general duties, special operations and support services or crime, investigations and related duty types;
- Ranks below commissioned officers;
- Those working fixed, rotating or flexible rosters or part-timers working normal weekday office hours.

Similar proportions of male and female police on FWAs in Australia experience victimisation or bullying (49.9 percent of men report never having been bullied versus 47.5 percent of women). Part-timers on FWAs in Australia experience more bullying than full-timers on FWAs (56.3 percent of full-timers report never having been bullied versus 46.6 percent of part-timers). There is not the same level of bullying for police on FWAs who mainly work full-time office hours (10.8 percent). In New Zealand, males employed under FEOs are less likely to have experienced bullying than females (23 percent versus 33 percent).

**Chart 22.1 Proportion (%) of police currently on FWAs answering "yes", "no", or "prefer not to say" to the question, "Have you ever suffered from victimisation or bullying as a result of your FWA?", by jurisdiction.**



## What police say about bullying and victimisation

Comments on the question "Have you ever suffered from victimisation or bullying from management or your peers as a result of your flexible working arrangement?" from respondents with FWAs were coded and thematically analysed. Please refer to "Flexible Working Arrangements for Police in Australia and New Zealand - Full Report 2017" for detailed responses.

The main categories of bullying and victimisation described by respondents are on a continuum that includes:

- Derogatory or abusive comments;
- Marginalisation;
- Exclusion;
- Being blamed for workplace problems;
- Obstructive and punitive management behaviours with the aim of pressuring them to return to standard working arrangements.

### Derogatory or abusive comments

*"You're a part-timer - you don't count"*

Many participants experience a range of types of bullying. Their experiences can vary from occasional comments at one end of the spectrum, to a sustained campaign of victimisation that has serious impacts on the wellbeing of the respondent. Derogatory or abusive comments range from "snide remarks", which respondents comment on but do not always consider to be bullying, through to significant degrees of abuse.

### Culture of the workplace

*"I see it as a whole of department attitude towards part-time workers"*

Respondents understand such attitudes to be related to a police culture in which police work is an all-or-nothing proposition that takes precedence over everything else. Such attitudes provide a justification for bullying behaviours.

Respondents commented on how widespread these attitudes are, and how having a FWA can directly lead to being a target for bullying.

### Marginalisation

*"If there are any jobs full-time members do not want to do it is given to me"*

Many of those on FWAs are experienced police officers who find they can no longer make an effective contribution in the workplace once they are on a FWA. Often they believe they are given "the crap jobs."

Losing desk or locker space is a very concrete sign of an officer's changed status, and provides tangible evidence of being unwelcome - particularly when it occurs in the context of other excluding behaviours.

### Exclusion

*"Not included or kept in the loop with what is happening"*

Direct exclusion from social and or work-related activities is another experience commented on by respondents.

Many said that they were unable to work in their specialist area, or at a level consistent with their experience. Sometimes colleagues clearly stated to them that the part-timer was not worthy of respect once they were on a FWA.

### **Part-timers have less right to their job than full-timers**

*"I was taking a full-timer's position"*

They experience significant difficulties in accessing training, higher duties and promotional opportunities. Not only that, many report that their peers and managers feel that they do not have the right to participate in these activities if they are on a FWA.

### **Blamed for workplace problems**

*"Meetings where part-timers are singled out about being part of the problem of the command"*

Commonly those with a FWA are blamed for many of the rostering and management problems in their workplace, including those related to inadequate staffing overall, or the inability to backfill staffing gaps, including the positions of part-timers.

### **Stigma and misinformation**

*"Middle management would rather not confront the issue"*

Some find it particularly difficult when their managers respond inadequately to or support the "complainers". Prejudices that are not challenged can cause conflict between colleagues.

### **Obstruction and punitive management behaviours**

*"A very stressful and upsetting process"*

When managers disagree with FWAs, they may make life very difficult for those staff who require them. Very often the requests for a FWA are being made in what is already a period of increased stress, and so the impacts of the additional pressure can be severe.

Shaming or punitive strategies are used by some managers to make those on a FWA uncomfortable. Bullying behaviour by managers is described by many respondents.

Part-timers can be regarded as too hard to manage, and as trouble-makers. They may be put under intense pressure to change their hours.

### **Failure to acknowledge the legitimacy of requests for FWAs**

*"It's not like her kid has cancer"*

The legitimacy of requests for FWAs is frequently challenged. Some managers seem to display little interest in or understanding of the logistics of using paid childcare, nor any concern about issues faced by their staff in relation to their parenting role. As a result, some staff experience demands that may be impossible and/or inappropriate for them to comply with.

### **Ignoring the rights of those on FWAs**

*"I'm the Commander I can do what I want"*

Respondents describe some managers overriding or ignoring their FWAs, or other aspects of their work conditions. Some respondents describe being expected to make up days, without pay, if they have had leave, not being allowed to take leave, or very intrusive processes when applying for or reviewing their eligibility for a FWA.

## 23 What police officers say about flexible working arrangements

*Police were given the opportunity to comment freely on flexible working arrangements. This section summarises the main issues they raise in their comments, focusing on the comments of:*

- *Police officers currently working regular full-time rosters*
- *Supervisors.*

### Police officers currently working regular full-time rosters

Over two thirds of the responses from this group, who were not currently on FWAs, were accepting of FWAs and were positive about their impact, or their potential impact if well managed. It was notable that a proportion of these respondents had had direct experience of FWAs, either themselves or through a partner.

There was a strong theme running through many of these comments that FWAs are essential for a modern organisation, and alongside this a perception that police management have been very slow in responding to the fundamental needs of their employees.

One of the most important needs for FWAs identified by respondents was to help them cope with family commitments.

Dealing with injury or other health issues, including job-related stress and burnout, and the needs of staff who are approaching retirement, were other frequently identified reasons for FWAs.

The perception that FWAs are only for police officers (mainly women) with young children is strongly challenged by many police.

The outcome of FWAs, according to most of these respondents, would be greater retention of police officers in the force, with improved well-being and productivity.

One of the most frequently raised concerns was police resourcing. A spectrum of opinions exists on this issue. Some respondents argue strongly that FWAs cannot be implemented successfully without more personnel, and they fear that FWAs will worsen current staffing issues. Many are cynical about the likelihood of any increased resourcing. Others argue that if they are adequately resourced, FWAs are part of the solution to the vicious cycle of job stress and sick leave caused by workload issues.

A minority of respondents were strongly opposed to FWAs. From their perspective, policing demands a total commitment, and is not compatible with having any other priorities. For those critical of FWAs, the consideration that such arrangements can be abused or are inequitable is a major concern.

Negative attitudes to FWAs did not predominate amongst respondents, but where they did the opinions were often very strongly expressed. The most strongly negative comments illustrated aspects of management attitudes and police culture that had been described by other respondents and which had frequently been identified as a barrier to FWAs.



The impact of FWAs within a team was a major concern for a great many respondents. If total staffing is reduced, the outcome is either that the staff member on an FWA is expected to carry a higher workload, or their work is redistributed to others in the team. Without backfilling and /or job sharing options, and if there is not proactive management of the inevitable issues within the team, FWAs have the potential to become extremely divisive. Inadequate resourcing seriously exacerbates these problems.

The need to maintain well-functioning teams that communicate effectively, to ensure fairness in the allocation of work and in rostering, and to manage the needs of staff who are not on FWAs as well as those who are, are incredibly important to these police. Many of them also provide suggestions or examples of good management practices where flexibility is enabled. There is acknowledgment of the complexity of balancing rosters and gratitude to managers who make the effort to do so fairly.

## Supervisors

Supervisors' comments on FWAs for police officers were separately coded and analysed. These respondents are all involved in making decisions on a day to day basis on FWAs for their staff, and their responses reflect a very wide range of viewpoints. Whilst many are supportive, a significant number are also opposed, and many express concerns about the broader impact of FWAs within the police force.

Many of these respondents have had direct experience of FWAs themselves, and as a result they understand the reasons FWAs are important, and how they can be made to work. They are also, in some cases, aware of what kind of battle may be involved in getting agreement on an FWA.

Many supervisors are extremely positive about the impact of FWAs and recognise that the police force needs to embrace them, although some acknowledge that significant changes may be required to allow this to happen effectively.

Many factors and attitudes are identified by supervisors as being significant in making FWAs work, including:

- Acceptance that looking after employees is an important role for managers;
- Recognition that FWAs, if managed well, are good for the whole team;
- Negotiation processes that are two-way, fair, and supportive of the employee;
- Understanding that flexibility from both the organisation and the staff member are necessary to come up with specific solutions.

There is a widely held view that a range of options, for example job sharing, need to be available and accepted, and resourcing issues that reduce their feasibility need to be addressed.

The most common concern expressed by managers is the need to balance the FWA with needs of other employees, particularly in regard to frontline roles, and concerns that the division of labour must be fair. This is probably the most common reason given for opposing FWAs.

Some argue that FWAs make it difficult to meet operational requirements. This is a dominant theme amongst those supervisors who are very opposed to FWAs.

Managers are caught in the middle. They are expected to implement policies, to ensure operational outputs are maintained, and to do so within static resources. There is a consensus that FWAs are

unsustainable without addressing resourcing issues. The inability to backfill positions is frequently commented on. Problem-solving at the local level may also not be supported.

A range of positive suggestions to deal with the issues related to FWAs are made by respondents. One option that is mentioned multiple times is the idea of a pool of relievers or casuals who can be called on as needed. It is also suggested that this role might be filled by officers on FWAs.

## **Opposition to FWAs**

A small proportion of respondents present a very negative view of FWAs and the reasons why officers request them. Some dispute the basic premise of FWAs, arguing that any policing model other than full-time police working standard rosters is unacceptable. Others do not acknowledge issues around childcare, or how this affects the workforce participation of parents.

Some appear to operate on the assumption that those requesting FWAs are not team players. It is evident from the comments of a number of police that there are a range of conflicting views about what expectations are appropriate for an employee to have regarding FWAs, and what the role of the union should be in supporting them. Issues raised include whether an FWA should be regarded as a long-term employment option; whether they are a right; whether employees can be compelled to work additional or different hours if needed; whether employees on FWAs are taking financial advantage of their arrangements; and whether it is fair that employees on FWAs have the right to apply for promotion.

## **Capacity of managers to support more complex working arrangements**

It is clear from the comments that managing staff on FWAs presents significant difficulties for some managers, and specific challenges are identified. Concerns include:

- That equitable access to FWAs may not be possible in small teams or in regional / remote areas;
- The concern to limit the number, duration and extent of FWAs within a team or work area;
- The challenges in arranging adequate supervision and training for staff working non-standard hours;
- The difficulties of rostering for multiple different roster types, especially where there is a component that is fixed.

It is also noted by some respondents that managers do not get training or support in how to manage these issues, and that these management skills are very valuable to the organisation. Clear policies on FWAs, and flexibility for managers to be able to individualise FWAs and solve their local problems, are identified as important.

# Part E

## Future outlooks



## 24 Career expectations - the next five years

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*Police were asked about their career expectations, and where they thought they would be in five years' time.*

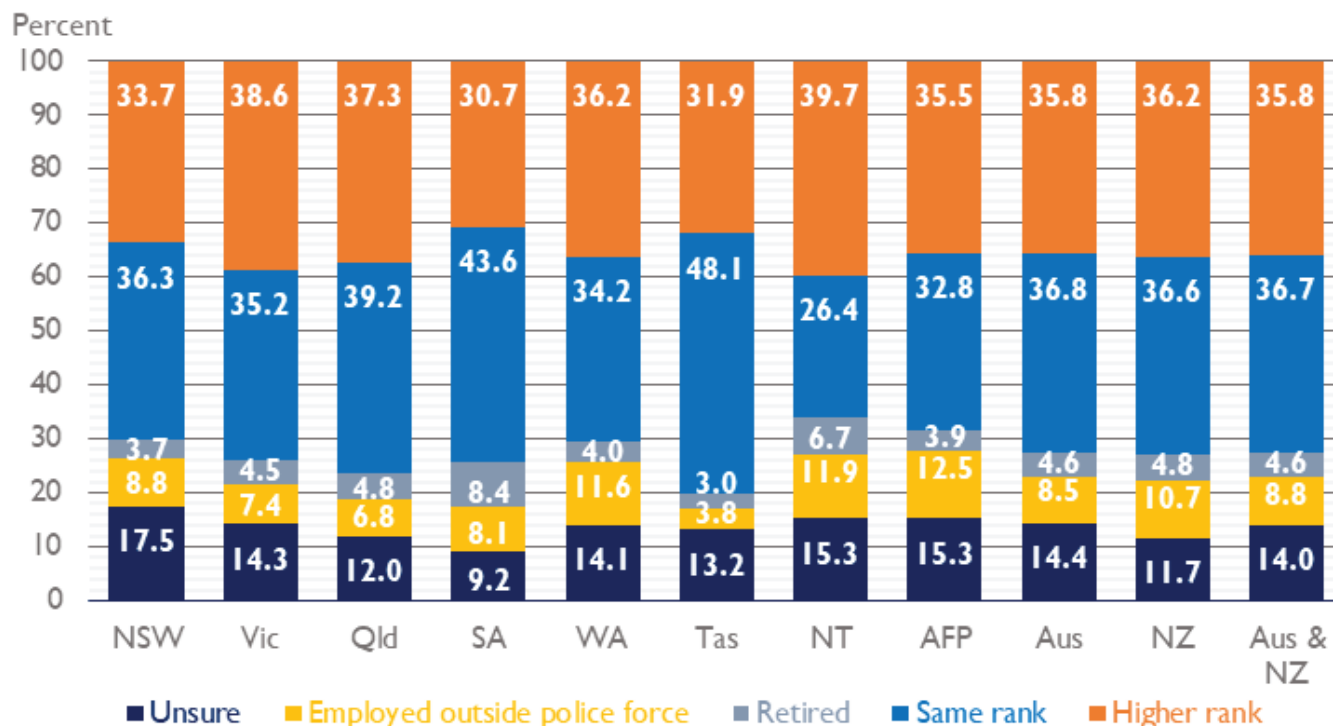
When the combined results for all police are examined, more than a third believe that in five years' time they will be at the same rank, and about the same proportion believe they will be at a higher rank. Nearly 5 percent expect to have retired and close to 9 percent expect to have left policing for other employment.

A different pattern emerges when those working on FWAs are compared with regular full-timers. Proportionately fewer police on FWAs, 10 percent less, have an expectation that in five years' time they will have been promoted. This is consistent with other survey data showing those on FWAs do not enjoy the same opportunities for training and career advancement.

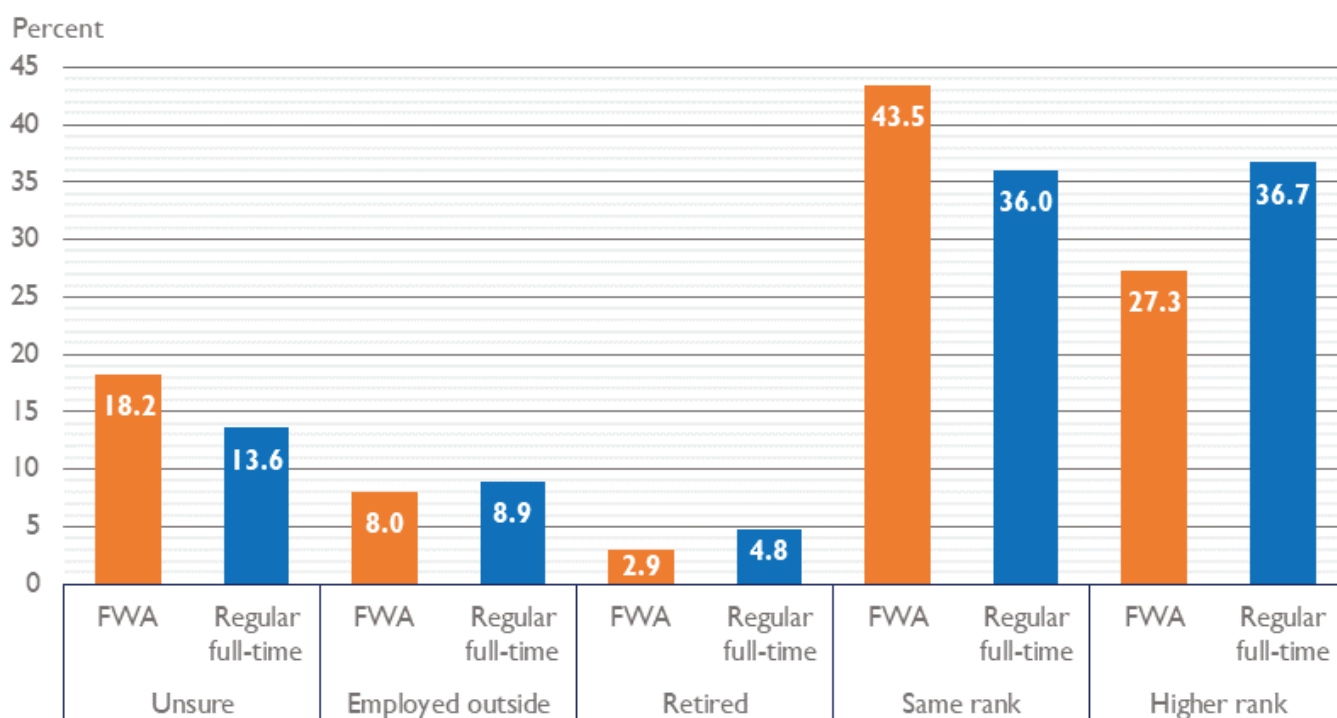
Regular full-timers are more likely to anticipate being retired or employed outside the police in five years' time.

Those on FWAs are more likely to be unsure about their future. This may relate to more uncertainty for those on FWAs associated with what, for many, is a temporary arrangement.

**Chart 24.1** Expected changes in employment and rank over the next 5 years. Proportion (%) of police, by expected change in status and jurisdiction.



**Chart 24.2** Expected changes in employment and rank over the next 5 years. Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand by expected change in status for a) police working FWAs and b) regular full-time police.



# 25 Changing profile of flexible working arrangements

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*To assess emerging changes in demand for future FWAs and possible associated shifts in working patterns, police were asked how likely they were to request an FWA in the next five years, and if so why?*

The data reported here is from those respondents saying they were certain or highly likely to make such a request. Comparing these reasons with the reasons for current FWAs, and the ratio of men to women intending to apply for FWAs, indicates that there may be significant changes in the future use of FWAs and the profile of applicants.

## **FWAs for parenting, now and in the future**

Looking ahead, requests by males for FWAs are likely to increase significantly. Currently an estimated 1150 males are on FWAs, but survey results suggest that more than 4700 men could request FWAs over the next five years. This would represent a rapid growth in the number of male police seeking to use FWAs for parenting, were this number of requests to be approved.

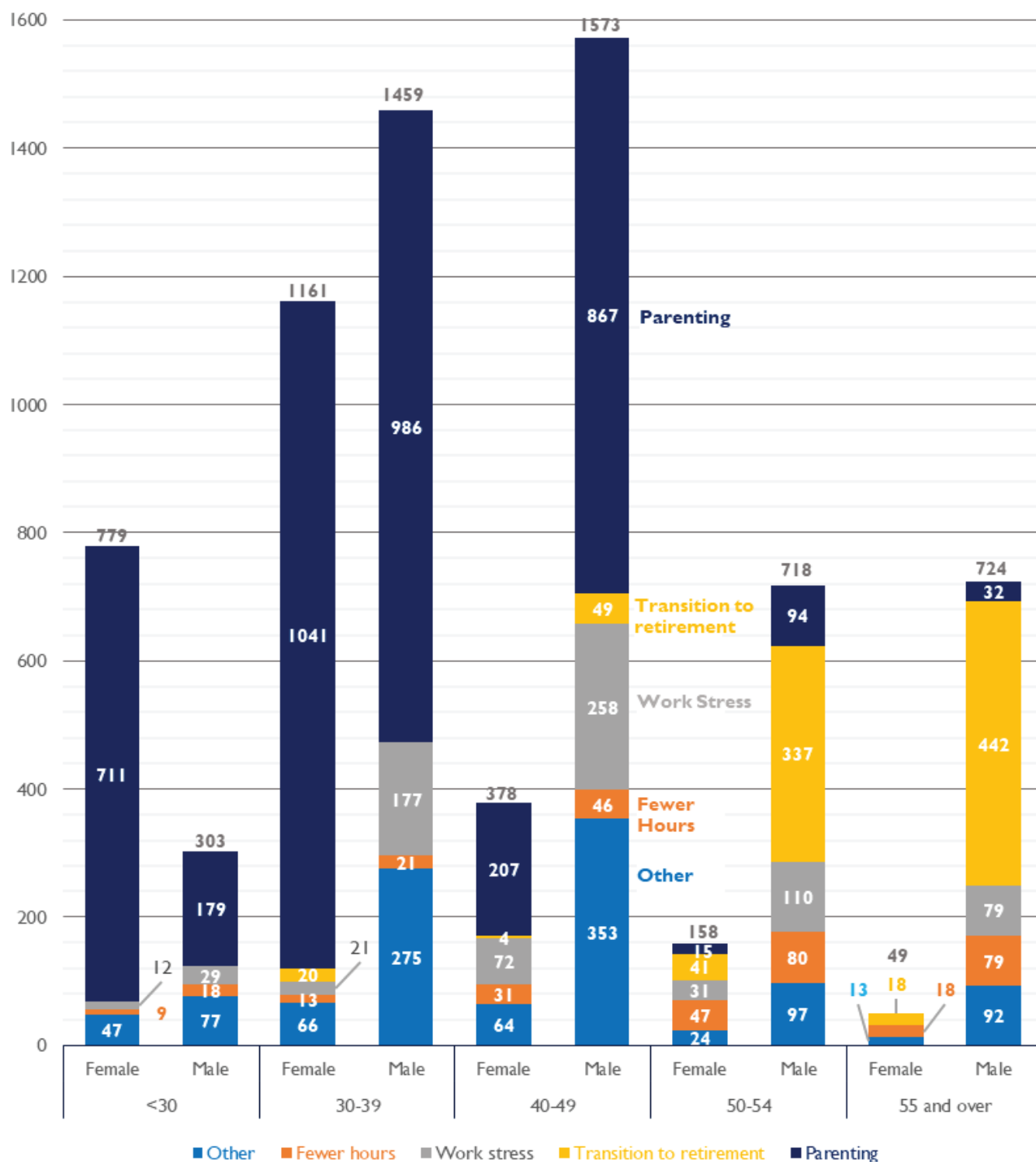
Comments from respondents provide some explanation for this emerging pattern. Women's participation in the workforce requires the flexible support of their partner, and for shift workers, this often means that both will require FWAs.

The reported likely increase in requests by older males for reasons relating to parenting is another significant finding. In fact, in the 40 - 49 age bracket, over four times more men than women are projected to request FWAs for parenting. While this number reflects the existing ratio of men to women in the police, it also represents a new pattern of shared parenting. Based on the comments provided, some of these respondents are men wishing to be more involved with their school age children, whilst others are willing to step back from their work so that their partner can progress in their own career once their children are older. Single parenting, including by male police, is another significant factor in this mix which is likely to continue to drive changes.

## **Transition to retirement**

Transition to retirement is an uncommon reason for FWAs at present. Less than 2 percent of the total number of current FWAs are for this reason, and most of these are for males over 50. However, around 13 percent of future requests for FWAs are likely to relate to transition to retirement. Over 750 requests for transition to retirement FWAs from male police officers aged over 50 are projected, based on survey responses, with very few requests coming from women. Although very small in number, the data suggests that requests from women aged over 50 for FWAs due to transition to retirement could also increase as a proportion of all requests from women officers in the over 50 age bracket over the next 5 years.

**Chart 25.1 Estimated number of FWA requests by police in Australia & New Zealand over the next five years, by gender, age and main reason for request.**



## Men and FWAs

Based on these survey estimates, male requests for FWAs are likely to triple over the next five years, which could outstrip the number of requests coming from female police. The reasons that men use FWAs at present are much more diverse than the reasons for women, as reflected in the fact that about a third of them are in the “other” category, which can include such things as sport, education, secondary employment, travel, or carer responsibilities, whilst for women only about 7 percent of their requests currently are for these reasons.

Work stress or requests to work fewer hours are relatively more common reasons for FWAs amongst male than female police. Looking ahead over the next five years, and assuming actual requests reflect survey responses, the number of future requests for FWAs from male police officers explicitly to deal with work stress is likely to increase significantly, while the number of male police requesting an FWA for transition to retirement could increase more than tenfold.



## What police say about future intentions to apply for flexible working arrangements

*Police intending to apply for a FWAs over the next five years were given the opportunity to comment on why they were considering an FWA in the future.*

### Parenting, family and relationships

Many police, male and female, said they will need a FWA in the future because they plan to have children. The responses to this question paint a picture of family life for many current police officers, with both partners in the workforce, and women fully expecting to return to work at some point with the support of their partners. If both are in the police, the career and childcare planning of both partners are inseparable, and a woman's return to work means her partner must also review their work arrangements.

Many males responding to this question support their partners' career ambitions. Some women have greater income-earning capacity, and male partners may be willing to consider reducing their hours if they have access to a FWA. Financial decisions related to parenting also involve weighing up childcare costs. In some cases, it is cheaper to have time off with child than to pay for childcare, and some male officers as well as female officers are willing to do this if they can.

For many, FWAs continue to be needed when children start school. Issues include out of school care availability, dealing with extracurricular activities and sport, the need for parental supervision of older children, and getting children to and from school. Some respondents are raising children alone. Being widowed or divorced, and court-ordered access arrangements, are the main reasons for single parenting.

Some police identified relationships as an issue. A few state that they are facing marriage breakdowns, whilst others are aware that they do not spend enough time with their families.

Some police provide care for a range of family members, including ageing parents. A few commented that they had a role in supporting a family business.

### Burnout, fatigue, and transitioning to retirement

Another significant group of responses relate to the need for better work-life balance. Respondents talked about stress, burnout and increasing fatigue at work, often saying how many years they have done shift work, and commenting on the toll taken on their health and family life. Specifically, some are still doing frontline roles as they come into their fifties, and feel the long-term consequences of this. Long commutes are also mentioned by some respondents.

A third set of reasons relates to older police officers looking for a transition to retirement. Male sergeants and above, including a few commissioned officers, make up more than half of this group. Some want to slow down but are not ready to completely give up a role in the police. Some wish to continue to work not out of financial necessity, but because they want to keep on contributing whilst they are able to do so. Some commented that working less hours may allow them to stay in the workforce longer.

Older police often want some respite from the pressure of shift work, long working hours, and the physical rigours of frontline roles, after having done this kind of work for many years. Transition to retirement using FWAs is a strategy for them to achieve this.

### Alternative future work plans

Some police are considering leaving the police to transition to a new career. For some of them, including some younger officers, FWAs are an opportunity to study and get the skills needed for a new career, or to change their role within the police.

## 26 Staying or leaving?

*Police were asked if they are considering leaving police work during the next 10 years. Those who are considering leaving were asked to indicate the main factors causing them to think about leaving police work.*

The responses to this question indicate that just over half all Australian and New Zealand officers - around 30,000 - are considering leaving, with some variation across the jurisdictions. This estimate roughly approximates a hypothetical turnover rate of 5 percent due to people leaving the force through retirement or otherwise of their own accord. These estimates are broadly consistent with the magnitude of the current national average turnover rate for police of around 3 percent, assuming many who are considering leaving eventually decide to remain.

### Reasons that police officers are considering leaving

#### Job dissatisfaction

Job dissatisfaction is the most commonly cited major factor for those officers considering leaving in the next decade. About 1 in every 4 serving police selecting this as a major factor.

#### Lack of flexible work

Lack of flexible work is the second most frequently cited workplace factor. The lack of flexible work opportunities is more important than factors such as salary levels, the amount of overtime, the physicality of police work or inadequate levels of police resourcing. The lack of flexible work is a major factor in the minds of roughly one third of those officers considering leaving - or about 16 percent of the total number of Australian and New Zealand officers, equating to around 10,500 officers.

#### Inadequate resources

Inadequate resources is the third most frequently cited workplace factor, with around a quarter of respondents who are considering leaving indicating this as a major workplace factor.

#### Family and health factors

Family and health factors rated by officers as influencing them to consider leaving are:

- Parenting responsibilities;
- Caring for older or disabled family members or relatives;
- Personal illness, injury or disability.

Parenting responsibilities is the most significant family and health related factor causing officers to consider leaving policing over the next decade. This is a major factor for more than 1 in 6 police officers who are currently thinking about leaving - the equivalent of 8 percent of all serving Australian and New Zealand officers. There is a strong linkage between officers considering leaving police work because of parenting or other caring responsibilities and the lack of flexible work.

Personal illness, injury or disability is a major factor for just under 10 percent of all officers thinking of leaving – equivalent to about 2900 Australian and New Zealand police officers.

Across Australia and New Zealand approximately 1400 police officers nominated caring for older or disabled relatives as a major factor influencing their decision to leave the force.

### External opportunities

External opportunities are alternatives to employment in the police for officers considering leaving police work. The opportunities investigated by the survey were:

- Retirement;
- Better outside job offers and outside job opportunity;
- Leisure and travel.

Retirement is the option most likely to be considered by officers. There are significantly more police considering retirement in the latter half of the decade (10,900 versus 2,800). There are many reasons for this. Respondents indicating retirement in the first five years (in the first survey question used in this analysis) made a choice of the most likely single outcome, whereas multiple major factors can be identified in the second question. Secondly, an estimated 1000 considering retirement in the second half of the decade would also think about taking an attractive outside job offer. Finally, the longer the time frame, the more likely officers are to consider early retirement (later in the decade ahead) where there are other linked factors at play.

A significant proportion of those who are considering leaving do not nominate any major external opportunities (retirement or outside job offer). We assume that those officers have not yet resolved their future directions (or chose not to say) should they decide to leave. In general terms, if retirement is not an option they will either leave the paid labour force or find work elsewhere.

More than 16 percent of Australian and New Zealand police, almost 11 000 officers, are estimated to be considering retirement in 5 to 10 years' time – just under 1 in every 3 police thinking of leaving over the next decade.

Job dissatisfaction, lack of flexible work and Inadequate resources are the most likely to be associated with the consideration of retirement. Job dissatisfaction is likely to be a major factor for more than 2300 Australian and New Zealand officers considering retirement.

For around 12 percent of all Australian and New Zealand Police Officers – an estimated 8100 officers - a better outside job offer or self-employment/small business opportunity likely to be a major factor prompting them to consider leaving the police force over the next decade.

### Linked factors associated with intentions to leave

“Linkage” or overlap between any two major factors occurs when a significant number of police identify both those factors as being major reasons for considering leaving. There is significant linkage between the lack of flexible work and other factors such as job dissatisfaction, parenting and caring, personal health, availability of good outside job offers and the option of retirement.

#### Job dissatisfaction with lack of flexibility

Data suggests there is a high degree of linkage between job dissatisfaction and lack of flexibility. In almost half the cases, police who identify “job dissatisfaction” as a major reason for thinking about leaving police work also identify “lack of flexibility”. By comparison, the linkage between job dissatisfaction and both salary and inadequate resources is just under 30 percent; and, the linkage with physicality of police work is 15 percent. It is reasonable to conclude that the lack of flexibility is itself a major cause of job dissatisfaction to the point that officers think seriously about leaving police work.

### Lack of flexible work with family and health factors

Roughly 40 percent of officers with caring responsibilities for relatives or personal illness, injury or disability link these factors with a “lack of flexible work” as major factors, and, more than half those thinking of leaving link parenting responsibilities with the “lack of flexible work” as major causes.

### Retirement with job dissatisfaction, lack of flexible work and lack of resources

There are significant linkages between consideration of retirement and other major factors. The greatest overlap is with “job dissatisfaction” - 21 percent of officers currently considering retirement also identify “job dissatisfaction” as a major factor in their thinking; 16 percent also identify the physicality of police work; and there is a 14 percent overlap with “lack of flexible work”. A roughly similar proportion nominate “lack of resources” - this is difficult to interpret in the context of retirement - more data is needed to reach any firm conclusions. It is however worth noting that these workplace factors are more important than personal illness/injury/disability or the physicality of police work, which might normally be associated with retirement decisions.

### Leaving police for outside work with job dissatisfaction, lack of flexible work and salary levels

In 80 percent of cases, the consideration of attractive outside job offers is associated with other workplace family and health factors. The most important factors linked with the consideration of leaving police for outside work include:

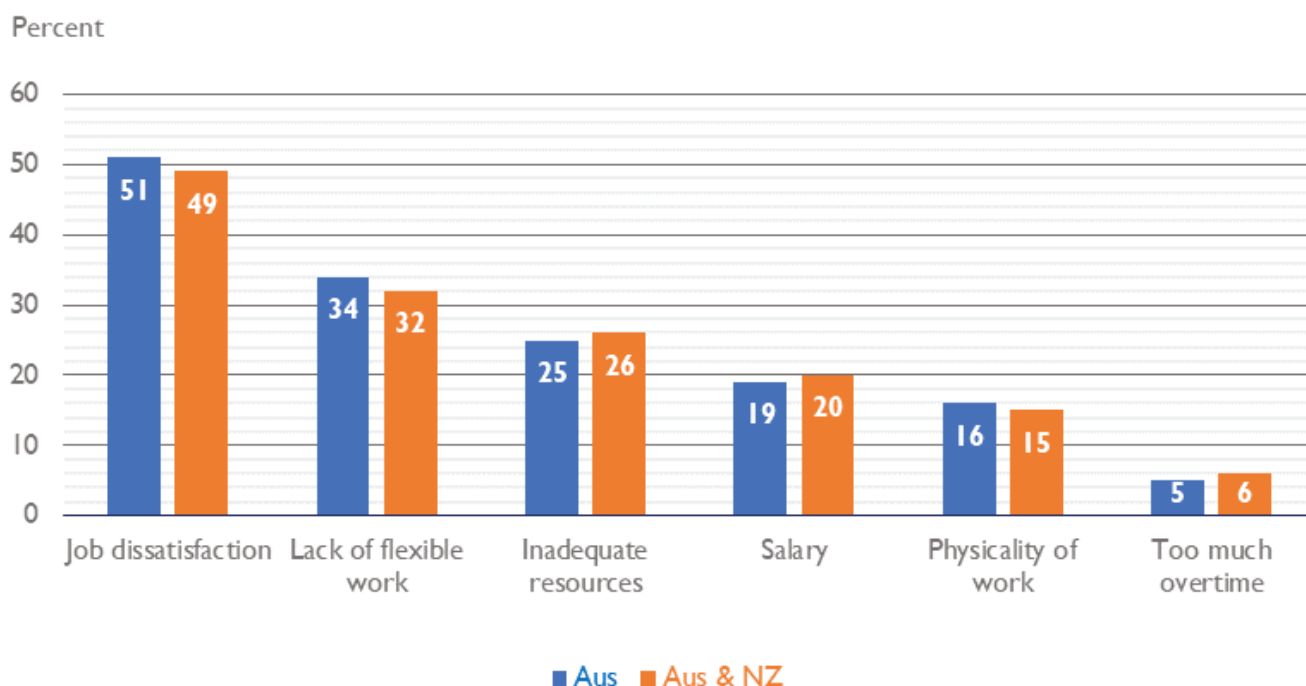
- Job dissatisfaction is a major factor for around 60 percent of all Australian and New Zealand officers who would consider a better outside job offer in the next decade.
- Lack of flexible work conditions ranks second as factor influencing around 40 percent of officers to consider a better outside job offer.
- Salary levels rate at the same level of importance as the lack of flexible work conditions in influencing officers to consider a better outside job offer.
- In more than 1 in 4 of those cases where police would consider an attractive outside job offer, both job dissatisfaction and lack of flexibility are also linked and major factors.

### Lack of flexibility: interactions with age and gender

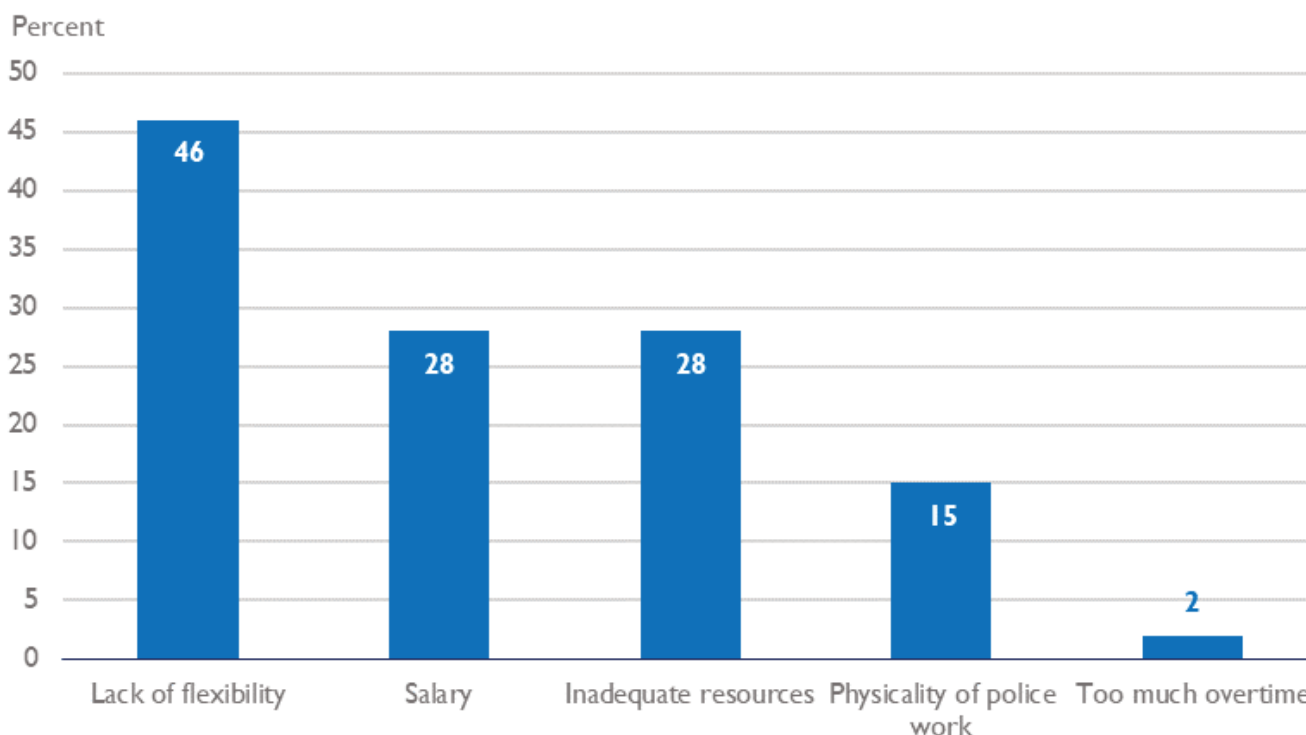
Female officers and those in younger age groups are most likely to be considering leaving policing over the next 10 years due to a lack of flexibility in the workplace - around 36 percent of female officers compared with 28 percent for their male colleagues.

By age cohort around 18 percent - just less than 1 in every 5 officers – aged between 30 and 39 years and around 16 percent of those under 30 years of age are considering leaving over the next decade. This compares with roughly 10 percent of those officers aged over 50.

**Chart 26.1 Reasons for considering leaving police work in the next decade: Proportion (%) of police in Australia and New Zealand rating each factor as a major factor.**

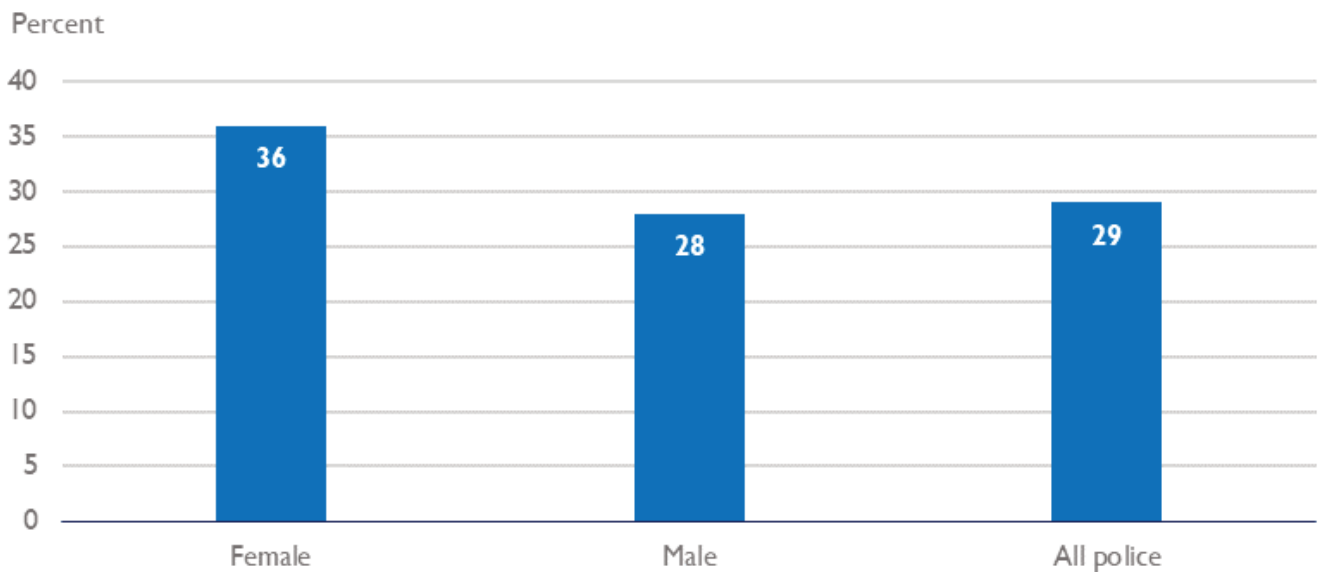


**Chart 26.2 Linkage between job dissatisfaction and other workplace factors. Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand who rate job dissatisfaction as a major factor also rating a) lack of flexibility b) salary c) inadequate resources d) physicality of police work e) too much overtime as a major factor (percentage overlap).**

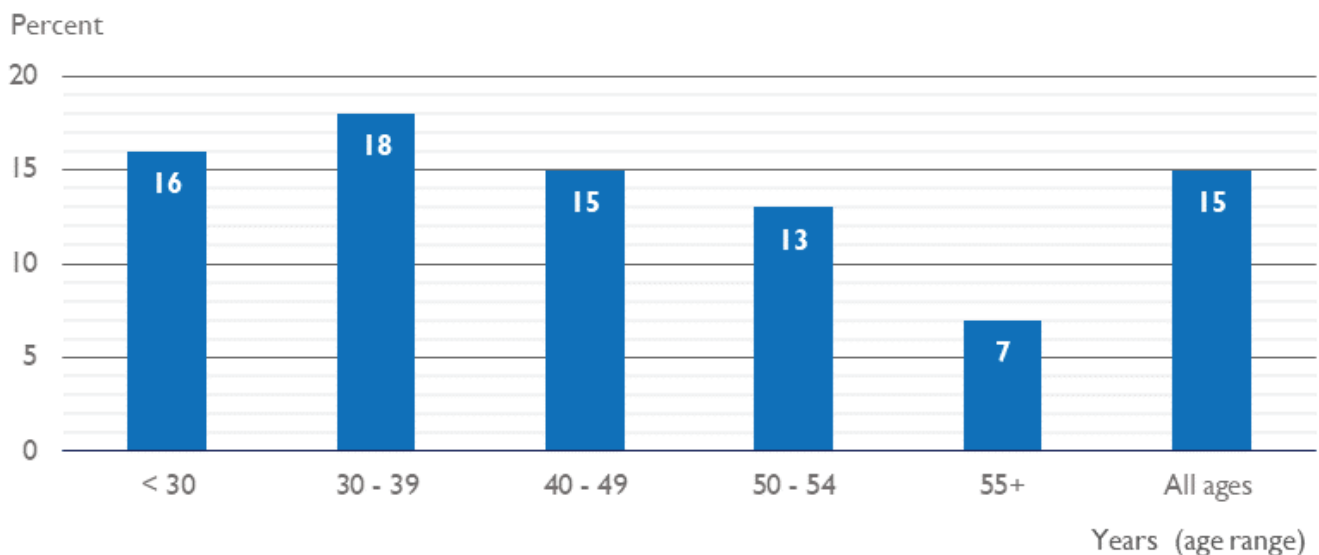




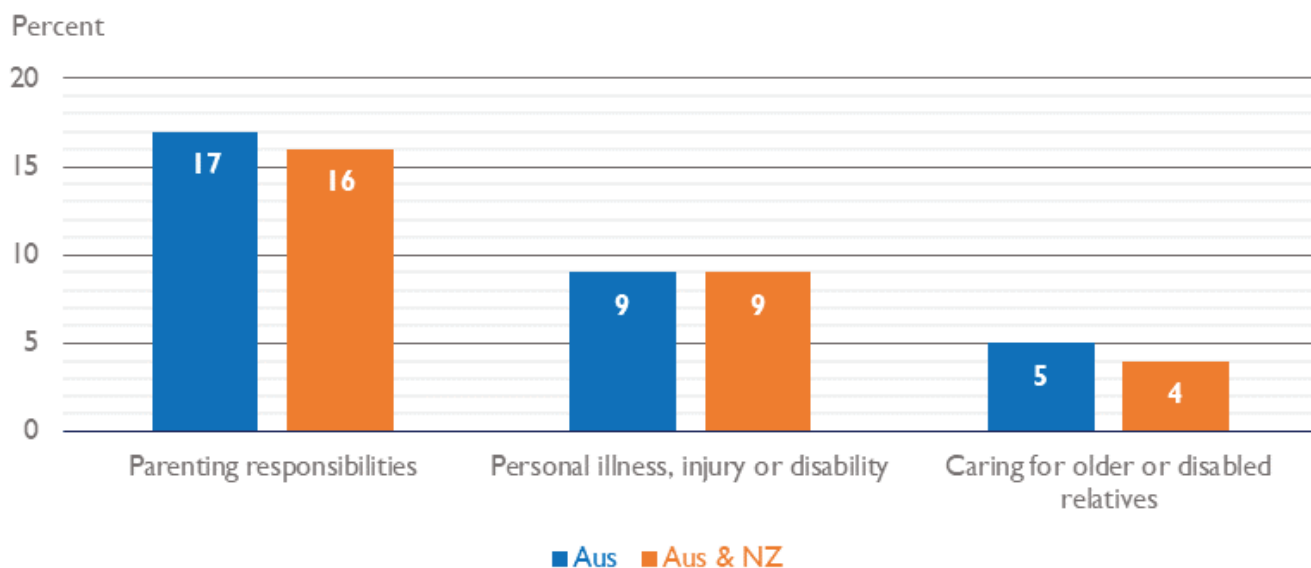
**Chart 26.3 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand considering leaving over the next decade who nominate "lack of flexibility as a major factor by gender.**



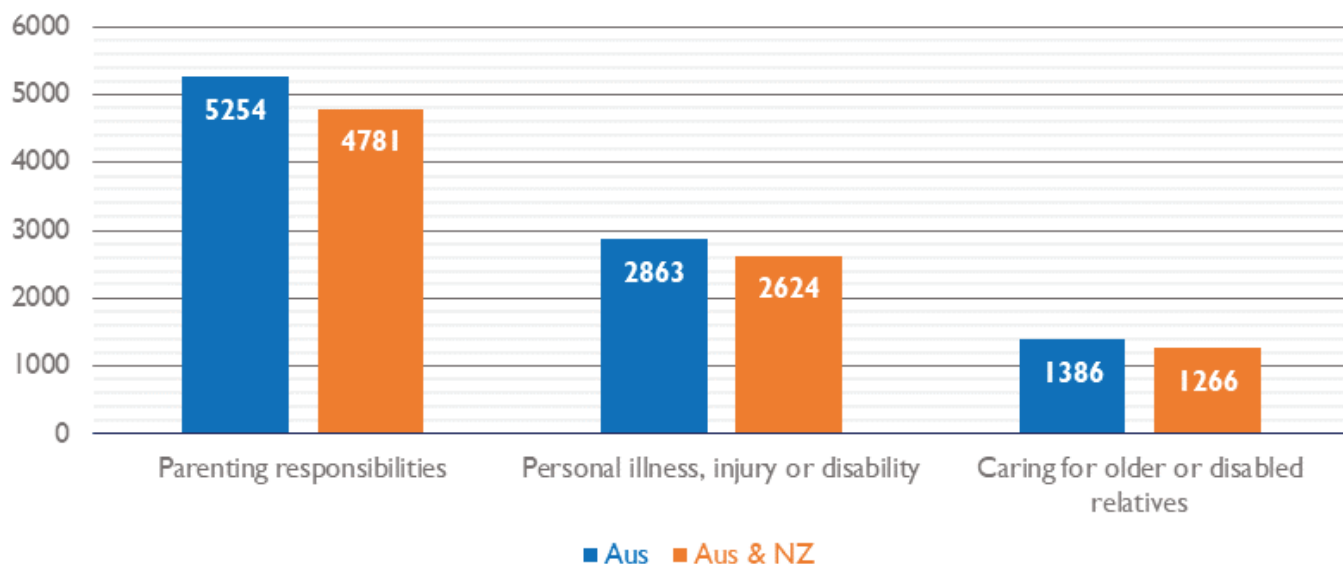
**Chart 26.4 Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand considering leaving over the next decade who nominate "lack of flexibility" as a major factor by age cohort.**



**Chart 26.5a Relative importance of family and health factors in causing police to consider leaving. Proportion (%) of police in Australia & New Zealand considering leaving over the next decade who nominate a) "personal illness, injury or disability b) parenting responsibilities or c) caring for older and disabled family members, as major factors.**

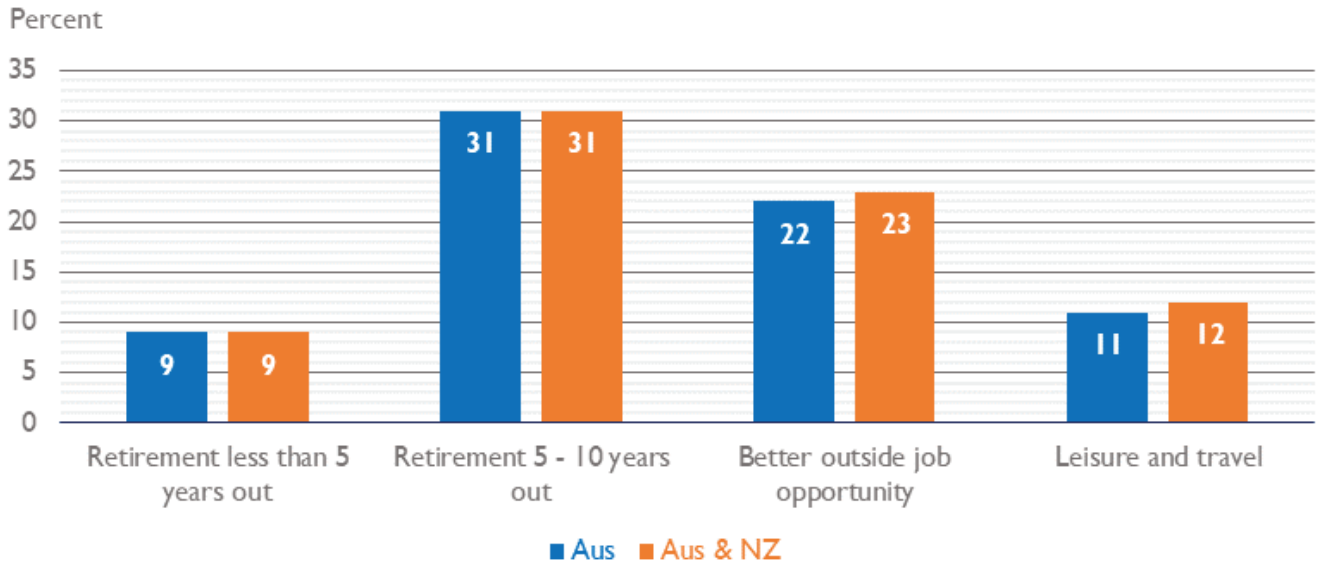


**Chart 26.5b Relative importance of family and health factors in causing police to consider leaving. Survey based estimate of the number of police in Australia & New Zealand nominating a) personal illness, injury or disability b) parenting responsibilities or c) caring for older and disabled family members, as major factors.**





**Chart 26.6 Relative importance of external opportunities in causing police to consider leaving. Proportion (%) of police in Australia and New Zealand considering leaving over the next decade who nominate a) retirement less than 5 years out b) retirement 5 - 10 years out c) better outside job opportunity or d) leisure and travel, as major factors.**







## Appendix 1 **Net Overall Agreement Rating**

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Overall levels of agreement/disagreement with statements were assessed by using a net overall agreement/disagreement rating. This rating was calculated by subtracting the percentage of officers disagreeing or strongly disagreeing from the percentage agreeing or strongly agreeing.

A maximum net agreement rating of +100 means that all officers agree or strongly agree. A minimum rating of - 100 means that all officers disagree or strongly disagree. A rating of zero or very low magnitude means that similar numbers of officers agree and disagree. A net overall agreement rating above 25 indicates those agreeing significantly outnumber those disagreeing. This is regarded as a “high level of overall net agreement” among respondents, while lower ratings are regarded as moderate or low levels of overall net agreement.

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## About the authors

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### UCoDA

UCoDA - Union and Community Data and Analytics - provides data, analytical and digital communication services to trade unions and community organisations. Major clients include the Police Federation of Australia and the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.





This report summarises findings of an on-line survey of Australian and New Zealand police conducted by the Police Federation of Australia in November and December 2016. Members of all Australian state, territory and federal forces participated.

The aim of the survey was to generate a detailed picture of police working patterns and workplace issues, with special reference to work-life balance and flexible working arrangements (FWAs). The main research objectives were to gain a better understanding of:

- Police working patterns and issues around work-life balance;
- The extent and profiles of FWAs as they operate on the ground in various work settings;
- The effectiveness and benefits of FWAs;
- Attitudes to FWAs;
- Negative impacts and barriers to implementation;
- The future role of FWAs.

