

CLEW'D IN

Newsletter of the Centre for Labour, Employment and Work (CLEW)

Issue 2016/4 – October 2016

NOTICES

2016 Labour, Employment and Work Conference (LEW2016)

'The Changing Nature of Work and Employment'

Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus,
Victoria University of Wellington
Dates: November 28 and 29, 2016.

Information on the [keynote speakers](#), the papers to be presented and [how to register](#) is available on our website.

Workplace Wellness: Policy and Practice Symposium

Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington
October 13 & 14, 2016.

Check out the [programme](#) and [register now](#) for one or both days.

COLLECTIVE VOICE, ACCESS TO TRAINING AND DESIRED CAPABILITIES IN NEW ZEALAND WORKPLACES

Recent research by CLEW associate Jane Bryson examines the outcome of collective bargaining processes on access to training in order to evaluate the power of collective voice as a mechanism for achieving desired capabilities in the workplace. Analysis of training provisions in the collective employment agreements database is augmented by other publicly available sources of training information in both collectivised and non-collectivised New Zealand organisations.

The surveys and CEAs that have been examined paint a picture of who tends to get most formal training (the more educated), in what sectors or industries (greater in public sector), and the drivers of this profile (professional/occupational competency requirements, government policy, and business need). Where regulatory or occupational pressure is not present CEA training clauses are more often restrictive or non-existent.

The research concludes that voice mechanisms alone (individual and collective) are not enough to ensure a) access to training, or b) negotiation of any values conflict between the organisation and the individual in the pursuit of desired capabilities. Bryson concludes that regulatory pressure will be key to catalysing a culture change in the strategy and practice of New Zealand organisations, particularly in the private sector, with regard to training provision.

Jane recently presented her research at a conference in Japan and will be publishing a further paper at a later date.

RESEARCH UPDATE:

WORK-LIFE BALANCE EXPERIENCES: TRADESPEOPLE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA'S MINING INDUSTRY

George Chipindiku, PhD, Curtin University¹.

Introduction

Work-life balance (WLB) provision is a major concern for workers seeking relativity between the quality of their working and non-working lives, particularly within environments where work intensity and work hours continues to grow. Typically framed as a white collar worker issue, WLB is of even greater importance for tradespeople with a variety of commuting work arrangements within the Australian mining industry.

According to the Department of Training and Workforce Development (2015), the Western Australian resources industry has experienced significant skilled labour shortage, in particular, for trades such as electricians, drillers, production technicians, mechanical fitters and boilermakers. With Australian mining businesses noting challenges in attracting, motivating and retaining a highly skilled, flexible and adaptable workforce, the range of FIFO, DIDO and Residential commuting arrangements² continues to grow. Mine workers in Western Australia work under different roster models and within dry (no alcohol) sites. How workers in this industry perceive and manage their WLB produced some interesting results.

FIFO and DIDO Mine workers and WLB

For mine workers in Western Australia, WLB is a self-defined, self-determined state of wellbeing that would enable them to effectively manage multiple responsibilities at work, at home, and in their community. Research studying 315 workers in the mining industry shows that, while WLB is highly valued by mine workers and their partners, for those engaged in FIFO and DIDO types of commuting arrangements, achieving WLB whilst working onsite is difficult. Mine workers engaged in either FIFO or DIDO commute arrangements struggle to manage issues surrounding long periods of family separation that make relationships unmanageable. They also lack the time to spend with friends, to engage in community activities, or to pursue further education and training.



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While most trades people are attracted by high wages and resultant lifestyles, the social costs of dysfunctional familial relationships for those on FIFO or DIDO commuting arrangements remain high. Mine workers with young families are affected more than workers who are single and those who have no child-care or parent-care responsibilities. Workers with young families were typically found to struggle with separation from their families, high levels of stress during the return/departure points in their roster cycle, and the challenge of defining familial roles. As the non-commuting parent has little or no support with childcare, having one parent working away from the family presents a rigid and challenging lifestyle for families of trades people with young families.

¹ George Chipindiku completed his MCom at Victoria University of Wellington.

² FIFO: workers who live in one location and fly into their work location on a roster arrangement; DIDO: workers who live in a location close enough to drive to their place of work on a roster arrangement; Residential: workers who live close enough to their place of work to commute daily.

However, trades people and their partners who had a FIFO work arrangement over a long period of time and those with non-dependent children developed resilience to the adverse effects of FIFO arrangements and gradually accepted these working arrangements and associated challenges as normal.

In addition to this, WLB for workers on an FIFO or DIDO work arrangement were affected by the isolated nature of mine sites, the quality of accommodation and food, facilities to wash clothes and onerous camp rules, all of which create tensions for both new and long-standing mining employees engaged in these commuting arrangements. Mining working conditions, including the prevalence of non-standard working hours, shift work,

weekend work and compressed work schedules, were found to result in fatigue, as well as eating and sleep disturbances. In such cases, some workers resorted to use of alcohol or illicit drugs to manage fatigue, stress or disrupted sleep, instead of seeking on-site support. Although, alcohol and drug use was found to occur away from the workplace, it nonetheless was found to negatively affect workplace safety and productivity. Similarly, the hangover effects of using drugs can last for several days causing further issues of fatigue, aggression and mood swings.

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When compared to FIFO and DIDO work arrangements, residential commuting work arrangements present a more supportive environment in the achievement of WLB for workers. Shorter rostering schedules and the ability to return home to see the family every day contribute to higher WLB for residential commuting workers.

Despite the challenges, positive aspects of FIFO, DIDO and residential commuting arrangements were also noted, including relatively long blocks of 'rest' or non-work periods in which to spend quality time with family and friends and the relatively high income levels that provide workers with relatively comfortable lifestyles. Other factors that influence a trades person's decision to either work on a FIFO roster or DIDO commuting arrangement include, career opportunities, employment culture, family satisfaction levels and social supports.

Conclusions

To support WLB, workers express a preference for shortening rosters to minimise stress and fatigue, providing flexibility with rosters, lower work-to-home ratios, access to timely and private communication options and better on-site living conditions and facilities. Other suggestions include developing recreational pursuits, site visits by employee partners and allowing alternative rosters to suit individual circumstances. Maintaining consistent communication with family and friends is considered to be an effective moderator to the negative effects of FIFO working arrangements.

Mine workers on FIFO or DIDO commute arrangements were often found to lack prior knowledge of the mining industry, as well as of how a FIFO or DIDO lifestyle may impact on them and their families. Most workers noted having little knowledge of the realities of FIFO and DIDO commuting arrangements and recommended pre-employment awareness training for new employees. To summarise, this research identifies challenges associated with either FIFO or DIDO commuting arrangements which make it difficult for trades people to achieve WLB during the period they are working on-site. Unlike residential commuting arrangements, FIFO and DIDO commuting arrangements do not provide a conducive environment for trades people to achieve WLB.

For further information about this research, please feel free to contact: georchip@gmail.com

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Employment Agreements Update 2015/2016 available for purchase

If you are heading into bargaining in the next few months make sure you have checked out our publication *'Employment Agreements: Bargaining Trends and Employment Law Update 2015/2016'*. The book is seen as the essential reference for employment relations experts and the only source of information on current provisions in employment agreements. It includes information wages/ salaries, term of agreements, all forms of leave, work hours and penal/overtime rates, redundancy, superannuation/ kiwisaver, union provisions and much more.

Download the [order form \(PDF 155KB\)](#) from our website.

Recent Seminar

BREXIT AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR WORK IN THE UK?

David Coats, Director, WorkMatters Consulting

David Coats has visited New Zealand on a number of occasions and has always provided an interesting perspective on work and the workplace. David is the founder and director of WorkMatters Consulting. He is a research fellow at the Smith Institute, a UK think tank founded in memory of former Leader of the Labour Party John Smith, and an associate at the Centre for Public Service Partnerships (CPSP) and the Local Government Information Unit (LGiU). David is recognised worldwide as an authoritative commentator on employment relations and quality of working life issues.

On his recent visit (in late August), we invited David to speak at a CLEW lunchtime forum on

Brexit and the impact on work in the UK. He began his presentation by explaining that it was not possible to understand how work would be impacted without understanding the background to both the UK's membership of the EU and also the context in which the campaign to exit was undertaken. He referred to the four freedoms that are fundamental to membership of the EU, in particular the 'right of free movement of labour'.

While the 'Euroseptics' have questioned Great Britain's membership of the EU since the days of Margaret Thatcher's leadership, the momentum to leave picked up with rise of UKIP and their anti-immigration policy and the entry of the Eastern European states into the EU. This led to a large number of East Europeans to work in Great Britain in line with 'free movement of labour' and increasing resentment, played on by UKIP, particularly amongst those in Great Britain who had suffered job losses and were in essence 'dispossessed by the economic policies of successive governments'. This group were disinterested in the 'Remain' campaign's focus on the

economic consequences of BREXIT as they had nothing to lose. David pointed out that *‘the results were based on a fear of immigration rather than the experience.’*

So what happens in the aftermath of BREXIT?

David pointed out that this was only speculative as the extent to which Great Britain and the EU are interdependent is yet to be tested. Nevertheless he identified several possible impacts on work.

1. Expectations of a recession and high-unemployment;
2. A fall in inward investment as a consequence of Great Britain no longer being an entry point to Europe.
3. In sectors which are reliant on migrant labour from the EU they will need to look at productivity enhancement or work intensification in order to remain competitive, particular with the reduction in a protected market for their goods.
4. The only competitive strategy will be to lower taxes and reduce employment protections.
5. A question mark as to whether there will be more opportunities in left behind communities or a continued decline.

David also suggested, however, that there will be an increase in demand for temporary and seasonal labour in sectors such as food processing and residential care as immigration is tightened. This could lead, he noted, to an enhancement of employment rights if there is more competition for labour in these sectors. The bigger question, though, is how long with Great Britain remain as a united country and what impacts would the splitting of the ‘United Kingdom’ have?

Notes by Sue Ryall, Centre Manager, CLEW

UPCOMING Conferences

2016 Labour, Employment and Work Conference (LEW2016)

‘The Changing Nature of Work and Employment’

Venue: Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus, Victoria University of Wellington

Dates: November 28 and 29, 2016

The Labour, Employment and Work (LEW) Conference provides a unique forum for researchers, policy makers and educators to come together to network, disseminate evidence and learn about emerging research and policy update. We are pleased to have Statistics NZ, the Ministry for Business Innovation and Employment and the Treasury supporting the Conference in 2016. The programme for the LEW2016 Conference is coming together and will provide many perspectives on this challenging topic.

In addition to our three expert keynote speakers we have forty-three papers across a range of themes that will be presented and discussed at the Conference. Papers cover a range of highly topical issues around work - wellbeing at work; regulation and work, the changing labour market; workplace capability; and the precariat and vulnerable workers. [List of papers submitted>>](#)

Statistics NZ will also facilitate two workshops, one on using data from the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI) and a second on the redeveloped Household Labour Force Survey (HLFS). Each workshop will include

presentations from people who have used the data for their research and will be of interest to those looking at the possibilities that these data sets present for research.

Information on the [keynote speakers](#), the papers to be presented and [how to register](#) is available on our website.

Workplace Wellness: Policy and Practice Symposium

Venue: Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington October 13 & 14, 2016.

IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO REGISTER!

Victoria University is collaborating with the Ministry for Social Development and other government agencies to present this symposium at the Intercontinental Hotel, Wellington on October 13 & 14, 2016. Amidst the many excellent presenters some keynote speakers are:

Dr Paul Litchfield has been Chief Medical Officer for British Telecommunications since 2001 and has been active in the field of workplace health and wellbeing for more than 30 years. He has contributed to the development of public policy in the UK for many years, undertaking independent reviews for Government into mental health at work and the controversial work capability assessment.

Sir John Kirwan (known to most as JK) will be joining us to share his take on mental health in the workplace.

Dr Tony Fernando will be talking to us about happiness at work and facing things head on.

Prof Philippa Gander will discuss how we can improve wellness with some new approaches to managing fatigue and shift work.

Hear from the **Chief Executives of WorkSafe** (Gordon MacDonald) **and ACC** (Scott Pickering), they will discuss the Harm Reduction Action Plan the two agencies have developed in an interactive session. This plan will drive their collaborative work to reduce injury and fatality rates in New Zealand's workplaces and is an approach that should be at the forefront of all health and safety professionals' minds.

Check out the [programme](#) and [register now](#) for one or both days.

CLEW – WHO ARE WE?

The Centre for Labour, Employment and Work (CLEW) is situated in the School of Management at Victoria University of Wellington. Our research and public education programme are centred on three pillars of research:

Organisational dynamics and performance

- What happens in organisations matters. From strategies, business processes, management practices, worker experiences to knowledge sharing, collaboration, innovation, productivity, engagement and trust – these all impact how individuals and organisations perform.

Contact person: Dr Geoff Plimmer

Tel: 04 463 5700

Email geoff.plimmer@vuw.ac.nz

Employment rights and institutions

- What is the role of trade unions and of collective bargaining in New Zealand's contemporary economy and society? Is the current system of employment rights and the institutions and processes for enforcement of those rights in New Zealand still relevant? Is it efficient, and does it contribute to overall productivity growth?

Contact person: Dr Stephen Blumenfeld

Tel: 04 463 5706

Email: stephen.blumenfeld@vuw.ac.nz

Changing nature of work and the workforce

- Rapid and increasing change in the external environment of organisations has fundamentally changed the world of work. Factors shaping how we organise and participate in work include rapid technological development, intensifying environmental and resource pressures, globalised markets, mobile workforces and changing demographics.

Contact person: Dr Noelle Donnelly

Tel: 04 463 5704

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