

# **JOB *futures*/SAULWICK EMPLOYEE SENTIMENT SURVEY**

**No. 0: October 1999**

A STUDY CONDUCTED FOR

**JOB *futures***

by

**IRVING SAULWICK AND ASSOCIATES**

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

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## JOBfutures/Saulwick Employee Sentiment Index

Report No 0    October 1999

### **Introduction**

This is the inaugural report of the JOBfutures/Saulwick Employee Sentiment Index.

The Index is based on a national survey of wage and salary earners who are in jobs, and among people actively seeking employment in the workforce.

It examines employees' views on:

- ❑ Job security;
- ❑ Fairness of pay;
- ❑ Safety;
- ❑ How their employers treat them, and
- ❑ Employer loyalty.

It also measures people's overall level of job satisfaction.

Among unemployed people it obtains a snapshot of their level of confidence in finding a job.

The survey was based on a representative random sample of 1000 employees throughout Australia, distributed in proportion to actual population distribution.

The fieldwork was conducted during October 1999.

### **Findings**

#### Job security

Australian workers, on the whole, say they are feeling more secure in their jobs now than they were a year ago.

People in white-collar occupations are slightly more inclined to say they feel secure than are those in blue-collar occupations.

People under 40 are more inclined to say they feel secure than do people over 40. The people least likely to say they feel secure are those aged between 40 and 54.

Full-time workers are slightly more likely to say they feel secure than do part-time workers, and casual workers are least likely to say they feel secure.

People who have been in their present job for more than a year are more inclined to say they feel secure than do people who have in their job less than a year.

Looking ahead, twice as many people say they are likely to feel more secure in 12 months' time than say they are likely to feel less secure.

### Security in employment

How secure do you feel?	Total	White collar	Blue collar	18-24	25-39	40-54	55+	Full time	Part time	Casual	In job < 1yr	In job 1yr +
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very secure	47	47	44	53	49	41	48	50	46	35	42	49
Quite secure	40	40	40	41	38	42	37	39	40	45	40	40
Not very	10	10	12	5	10	13	10	8	14	14	13	9
Not at all	2	2	3	1	2	3	1	3	1	3	3	2
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	2	*

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number. \* denotes less than 1 per cent.

### Fairness of pay

Nearly seven out of ten employees say they are paid a fair day's wage for a fair day's work. Two out of ten aren't sure and one out of ten says he or she is not paid fairly.

People without any post-school qualifications are more inclined to say they are paid fairly than are people with a post-school qualification.

Related to that, blue-collar workers are more inclined than white-collar workers to say they get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

People aged between 25 and 54, who might be thought of as being in the prime of their working lives, are slightly more inclined to say they were fairly paid than is anyone else.

Employees in New South Wales were more satisfied with the fairness of their pay than were employees in Victoria.

### Fairness of pay

I get a fair day's pay for a fair day's work	Total	White collar	Blue collar	18-24	25-39	40-54	55+	NSW	Vic
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Mean (on a scale of 1-5 where 5 means strong agree and 1 means strongly disagree)	3.9	3.9	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8	4.0	3.8

### How employers treat their staff

Just over seven out of ten employees say their employer treats them with respect.

Women are more likely than men to say they are treated with respect. Otherwise the

responses to this question are remarkably constant across employees with different levels of education, in white and blue-collar occupations, and across age groups.

The mean for women on this question was 4.1 and for men 3.9.

Full-time workers were slightly less inclined to feel they were treated with respect than were part-time or casual workers. The mean for full-timers was 3.9 and for the other two groups it was 4.1.

Among the 12 per cent who said they were not treated with respect, the commonest reason given was their age, as opposed to race or gender.

### Safety

Nearly eight out of ten Australian employees feel their employer sees that their workplace is safe. Again, responses are remarkably consistent across blue and white-collar occupations, age ranges, and across full-time, part-time and casual employees.

However differences appear between males and females, with females more inclined to say their employer is safety-conscious (mean 4.3) than are men (mean 4.1).

New South Wales employees (mean 4.3) are more inclined than Victorian employees (4.1) to say their employer is safety conscious.

### Employer loyalty

Three quarters of the nation's employees are confident their employer would stick by them in times of ill-health or family trouble.

If anything, this confidence is more widely held among the less educated and blue-collar workers, but the variations are only slight.

Across the age groups, only the 40-54-year-olds feel less confident – and this is the same group which feels less job security.

New South Wales employees are more inclined than Victorian employees to say their employer would stick by them.

### **Employer loyalty**

I'm confident my employer would stick by me if I had some personal trouble such as health or family trouble.	Total	White collar	Blue collar	18-24	25-39	40-54	55+	NSW	Vic
	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.	no.
Mean (on a scale of 1-5 where 5 means strong agree and 1 means strongly disagree)	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.0

Overall, 88 per cent of employees said they were satisfied with their present job, 35 per cent very satisfied and 53 per cent reasonably satisfied.

On a scale from +2 (very satisfied) to -2 (not at all satisfied), the workforce as a whole puts itself at 1.1. Blue collar workers put themselves at 1.2, as do older workers (55-plus).

Men and women are equally satisfied with their jobs.

People's reasons for liking their job are vague, but have much more to do with job satisfaction than with money.

The commonest explanation – given by nearly one third of the workforce – is that it's a great job, it gives them satisfaction or they simply love the work.

Good wages or salary is given by only 7 per cent.

### The unemployed

There is a substantial degree of mobility among the unemployed. Nearly 60 per cent had been unemployed for less than 12 months.

However, 22 per cent had been unemployed for up to five years and another 17 per cent for longer than five years.

Thus there are two sides to the unemployment picture.

One side shows a picture of people – mainly younger men – moving into and out of unemployment in less than six months.

The other side shows a picture of mainly older people and women being stuck in unemployment for long periods of time. Older women in particular are vulnerable to this.

Education or occupation type appear to have comparatively little influence on the amount of time a person is unemployed.

The incidence of short-term unemployment (less than six months) is higher in Sydney than in Melbourne, but the incidence of long-term unemployment (greater than a year) is higher in Melbourne.

Just over half the unemployed are confident of finding a job in the next six months.

Younger people – particularly under 24 – are much more confident of achieving this than are older people.

People's confidence about finding a new job is very much influenced by the amount of time they have been unemployed. The longer they have been out of work, the less confident they are of finding work again.

### Confidence in finding work

Confidence in finding a new job		Length of time unemployed				
	Total	Less than 6 months	6 to 12 months	1 to 5 years	More than 5 years	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Very confident	26	51	22	6	15	–
Reasonably confident	28	29	37	21	27	–
Not very confident	21	12	24	42	8	–
Not at all confident	18	6	17	21	38	–
Don't know	6	2	–	9	12	2

Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

### Government's performance on jobs

There is a widespread feeling in the working community that the Government is not doing as much as it could to help create new jobs.

More than half the respondents to this survey are of this view; only 28 per cent say the Government is doing as much as it can in this direction.

White collar workers are more decisive and more critical of the Government on this issue than are blue collar workers: 56 per cent of white collar workers say the Government could be doing more, a view shared by 48 per cent of blue collar workers. However, nearly a quarter of blue collar workers have no opinion on this question, while only 15 per cent of white collar workers have no opinion.

People over 24 are much more inclined to criticise the Government on this score than are people aged 24 and under.

Generally, the community of employees sees the Government's performance in this area as being about the same as it was a year ago, and are slightly inclined to be pessimistic about the employment outlook 12 months ahead.

Nearly 30 per cent of employees say they think unemployment will be higher in 12 months' time, while 24 per cent say they expect it will be lower, and 41 per cent say it will be about the same.

There is very little, if any, difference between the employed and the unemployed on this question.

People's views on this issues are coloured by their own political leanings: Coalition voters are much more inclined than Labor voters to say the Government is doing as much as it can.

#### **Government's performance on job creation**

The Government is presently:	Total	White collar	Blue collar	18-24	25-39	40-54	55+	Coalit'n voters	Labor voters
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Doing as much as it can to help create jobs	28	28	29	36	25	30	26	42	23
Is not doing as much as it could to help create jobs	53	56	48	38	56	55	58	43	63
Don't know	18	15	23	25	19	14	16	15	14

All percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.

Further details of this survey are available on request from JOBfutures at (put in detail) or from Irving Saulwick & Associates on (03) 9537 2192 or (03) 9349 3994.

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