



Australian Government

Equal Opportunity for
Women in the Workplace Agency

Case Studies from EOWA Flexibility Survey

Alcoa of Australia

Workplace Flexibility

Alcoa has a Managing Director who practices what he preaches. Alan Cransberg, who has worked for Alcoa for 28 years, is a father of four and has made it very clear to employees that if their child has a special school assembly, then they shouldn't be at their desk. With this leadership, gaining loyalty and commitment from employees, as well as developing a sound platform of mutual respect is undoubtedly enhanced.

At Alcoa, it's believed that embracing women and providing flexibility for working mums makes good business sense. In an increasingly tight labour market, the company has found it enjoys a much greater talent pool of female staff by offering a level of flexibility.

Karen is an Information Systems Consultant, based at Alcoa's Point Henry Smelter in Geelong, Victoria. Karen has worked for Alcoa for 20 years and is involved in systems analysis and development, project management, systems support and database administration. Karen is married with two daughters and utilises Alcoa's flexible hours policy and working from home arrangements.

'When I returned from maternity leave after my first daughter, I remained full-time but did two days from home', says Karen. 'After my second daughter I choose to go part-time and Alcoa supported that. Initially, I was only working three days a week but I was soon offered more time. But when I explained that I would need to get extra child-care and it would therefore not work for me, Alcoa offered me the chance to work a number of hours from home for a trial period. I was happy with that, it worked well, and I recently increased my home hours from five to eight.'

'Having a flexible employer means I can volunteer at my elder daughter's school and that helps give her a sense of importance. I walk her home from school and we can then catch up on the day, instead of me rushing home at 5 or 6 o'clock to cook tea, do housework and only get half the picture of what is going on in her life. The arrangements I have in place with Alcoa give me flexibility and the ability to fit it all in.'



Australian Government

Equal Opportunity for
Women in the Workplace Agency

Elder Care

By taking the issue of work/life balance seriously, Alcoa knows it stands a far greater chance of attracting the right people who are best placed to assist in delivering bottom line results. For these reasons, encouraging diversity and providing opportunities for women to realise their career potential have been central strategies for Alcoa.

Wai Lim, an Experimental Scientist, has been part of the Alcoa team since 1992. She works in research and development under the Technology Delivery Group at the Kwinana Refinery. Wai Lim is the carer of her elderly mother, who also lives with her. She works part-time and has the flexibility to work from home when the need arises.

‘Part-time works for me because I need to give support to my mother,’ Wai Lim says.

‘She’s in her 80s and started to need my assistance due to her health. Being a carer takes a lot out of you and my work arrangements allow me the extra time I need for myself and my family.

If my mum has an appointment at the doctor and the appointment falls in my normal work time, I have the flexibility to come in for half a day or work from home.

When I do need to work from home, I just need to inform my supervisor that I won’t be on site but will be available on the phone and online and it’s never a problem.’

For further information about Alcoa’s EO programs, please contact :-

Sarah Tempest (08) 9316 5462; 0404 800 417.