

Leading retailers know their workforce.

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The last two decades have seen a dramatic increase in the participation of women in the workforce. Population projections indicate that the workforce will continue to change, particularly as a result of the aging of the population.

The nature of the workforce impacts significantly on staffing practices. The growing drive towards work/life balance and flexible working hours has, in large part, been generated by women's increased participation in the labour market.

The competition for young talent and particular skills is likely to intensify. Also, as the population ages, it is likely that elder care and retirement-transition issues will become an increasingly important focus for both employees and employers.

In short, finding and keeping good staff is not a 'fad' concern – it will be an enduring key issue for retail employers. And knowing the workforce is critical to developing effective strategies.

Leading retailers are responsive to the changing nature of the workforce.

Want to profile your workforce?

You can download an electronic tool that will assist you to profile the composition of your workforce. It is available from EOWA. Visit them at: www.eowa.gov.au

The Retail Workforce in Australia — Vital Statistics¹

- Retail employs more people than any other industry sector in Australia. There are 1 347 800 employees in the retail sector. This is 14 per cent of the Australian labour force.
- The largest proportion of employees in retail is male full-time workers (34%), followed by female part-time workers (32%), female full-timers (19%), and male part-timers (15%).
- Women make up 51 per cent of the retail workforce.
- Part-time workers constitute 46 per cent of all employees.
- Nearly 41 per cent of retail employees are under 25 years of age.
- While only 22 per cent of managers are women, 67 per cent of these are employed at the lower levels of management.

International comparisons

In the UK, retailing accounts for 13 per cent of the workforce. Women make up 62 per cent of all employees, and almost half of all workers are employed on a part-time basis. Eighteen per cent of managers are women.

In the USA, retail trade makes up 18 per cent of employment. Women make up 53 per cent of all employees, and part-timers make up 36 per cent of the retail workforce. Thirty nine per cent of managers are women.

¹ ABS Labour Force Publication 6203 May 2001