Tasmania’s emerging industry trends confirm a shift to part-time work

The healthcare and social assistance sector has overtaken retail as the largest source of jobs in Tasmania, a new report by the Institute for the Study of Social Change has found.

Demographer Lisa Denny’s analysis of the 2016 Census has also revealed that since 2006, manufacturing has dropped from the top five providers of employment in Tasmania, overtaken by three sectors: education and training; public administration and safety; and accommodation and food services.

In the second of the Institute Insight series, Ms Denny said that while the Tasmanian workforce grew 4.8 per cent (9,672 people) from 2006 to 2016, the composition of the workforce by industry sector shifted considerably, with nine industry sectors experiencing workforce decline. As with Insight One, which examined changes to the way Tasmanian men and women participate in work, the Insight Two report has found a significant shift from full time to part-time work.

Key Insight Two findings:

- In Tasmania since 2006, the size of the workforce increased in 10 of the 19 Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) industry sectors;
- The healthcare and social assistance sector became the largest workforce and contributed the greatest growth in both absolute and relative terms to the whole Tasmanian workforce;
- The Tasmanian workforce is dominated by industry sectors that are largely publicly funded;
- The greatest job losses were experienced by men employed full time in the male-dominated, manufacturing sector;
- The greatest job gains were experienced by women employed part-time in the services-based sectors of healthcare and social assistance and education and training;
- The construction industry was the only sector in which the majority of workforce growth was in full-time employment (74.2 per cent of additional construction jobs were full time);
- More than half the workforce in six of the 19 industry sectors was aged over 45. This included two of the largest and fastest-growing sectors: healthcare and social assistance (54.6 per cent); and education and training (54.4 per cent).

The Insight Two report reveals that the size of a sector’s workforce does not necessarily reflect the sector’s contribution to the Tasmanian economy in terms of Gross State Product (GSP).
Despite a reduction in the size of the workforce, the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector overtook manufacturing as the greatest contributor to the Tasmanian economy in the 2015/16 financial year, accounting for 10.3 per cent of GSP (up 0.5 of a percentage point since 2005/06).

Manufacturing fell from first to third position in terms of contribution to the economy, falling from 11.5 per cent of GSP in 2005/06 to 8.3 per cent in 2015/16.

As well as increasing the size of the workforce, the healthcare and social assistance sector also increased its economic contribution, becoming the second-greatest contributor to GSP, surpassing construction (which dropped to fourth), education and training (which remained fifth) and transport, postal and warehousing (which dropped to sixth).

Although their overall contributions to the economy and workforce are relatively small, there were considerable GSP contribution increases in the decade from 2006 from the financial and insurance services sector (up 1.1 percentage point); the professional, scientific and technological services sector (up 1.0 percentage point); and the information media and telecommunications sector (up 0.7 of percentage points).

Ms Denny said the findings pointed to key challenges, but also opportunities, for the future of Tasmania’s work environment.

“Given that more than half the workforce in six of the 19 industry sectors is aged over 45, including in two of the largest and fastest growing sectors - healthcare and social assistance; and education and training - it is likely that over the next 15 to 20 years around half the workers will exit the workforce,” Ms Denny said.

“This will create challenges in projecting and planning for new and replacement labour, and providing appropriate education and training services. The opportunity, however, is workforce renewal, including the potential for increased productivity, if managed well.”

Ms Denny said key issues included:

- How to maintain engagement and productivity in the workforce by older workers;
- How to transfer skills and knowledge across industries as workforces fluctuate;
- How to project employment demand for new jobs and labour to replace an ageing/retiring workforce;
- How to challenge gender stereotypes to encourage men and women to consider work opportunities in non-traditional sectors;
- How to increase employment in the private, traded sectors for both men and women;
- How to reverse the decline in full-time employment to ensure Tasmanians have the opportunity to improve their economic and social prosperity and well-being.

Read the full Insight Two report at http://www.utas.edu.au/social-change/institute-insights

For more information: Sally Glaetzer, 0439 862 420 or email sally.glaetzer@utas.edu.au

Information released by:
University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office
Phone: 61 3 6324 3218
Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au