

Media Release: Graduates at Work

Graduate Careers Australia

Embargoed until 11.30 pm, Tuesday, 24 July 2007

Graduates at Work

Graduate Careers Australia (GCA) has today released three new reports examining the experience of recent graduates both during and after their study.

The three reports, *Graduate Destinations 2006*, *Graduate Salaries 2006* and *Graduate Course Experience 2006*, are based on the annual *Australian Graduate Survey (AGS)* of new graduates from institutions of higher education. The 2006 AGS gathered 115,603 responses from a total of 205,139 recent graduates.

Graduate Salaries

- *Graduate Salaries 2006* reports that graduate starting salaries for those employed in regional areas were marginally higher than for those employed in capital cities¹.

New graduates employed in regional areas earned \$2,000 more than those employed in capital cities (\$42,000 compared with \$40,000).

Salaries in regional areas were considerably higher in the fields of earth sciences (by \$15,500), optometry (\$11,500), physical science (\$5,000), architecture and building (\$4,500) and engineering (\$4,000).

New graduates employed in capital cities earned more than those employed in regional areas in the fields of dentistry (by \$3,000), economics and business (by \$4,000) and accounting (by \$3,000).

- Since 1977, graduate starting salaries have grown by 425.0 per cent. For evaluative purposes, changes in graduate starting salaries are compared with changes in average weekly earnings, which grew by 533.3 per cent since 1977².

The field of education with the highest level of growth since 1977 was law, at 736.8 per cent.

- For a comparable group of bachelor degree graduates, those with previous full-time work experience (\$44,400) earned only slightly more than those without any previous full-time work experience (\$43,500)³.
- The starting salary for new bachelor degree graduates aged less than 25 and in their first full-time employment was \$40,800, which was 79.7 per cent of average earnings⁴.
- The starting salary for females (\$40,000) was 95.2 per cent of the starting salary for males (\$42,000)⁵.

¹ Table 10 in the *Graduate Salaries 2006* report.

² Table 17 in the *Graduate Salaries 2006* report.

³ Table 6 in the *Graduate Salaries 2006* report.

⁴ Table 2 in the *Graduate Salaries 2006* report.

⁵ Tables 1 and 19 in the *Graduate Salaries 2006* report.

A large proportion of the difference between overall median salaries for males and females may be due to choice of degree or field of education, which can have a direct effect on graduates' occupations and sectors of employment.

Graduate Employment

- Over two-thirds of full-time employed graduates (68.1 per cent) were working as professionals.

Graduate Destinations 2006 reports that an additional 4.5 per cent were employed in a management and administration role with 11.2 per cent in a para-professional position and 13.5 per cent in a clerical, sales or service related job⁶.

- Graduates in veterinary science, teaching, health, engineering and architecture were most likely to have been working in an area related to their field of education⁷.
- Graduates with a double degree (85.5 per cent) were more likely to have found full-time employment than those with a single degree (81.6 per cent)⁸.

Graduate Destinations 2006 confirms preliminary graduate employment figures released last December which showed that, of new bachelor degree graduates who were seeking full-time employment, 82.4 per cent had found it within four months of completing their studies. A further 12.2 per cent were working on a part-time or casual basis while still seeking full-time employment and 5.5 per cent were not working and seeking full-time employment⁹.

Since 1990, bachelor degree level completions have grown by 64.6 percent, but the percentage of new graduates in full-time employment has remained relatively steady. The labour market has been able to absorb these growing graduate numbers without a notable rise in the number or percentage of graduates seeking full-time employment.

In addition, the most recently available Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data (May 2006) show that just 2.4 per cent of those in the general population with bachelor degrees were unemployed compared with 7.3 per cent of those who had not completed post-secondary education and 5.0 per cent of all persons.

Graduate Course Experience 2006, which reports on the learning experiences of higher education graduates, shows that 89.5 per cent of bachelor degree graduates were broadly satisfied with their overall study experience¹⁰.

Graduate Outlook

Cindy Tilbrook, Executive Director of Graduate Careers Australia, said, "Graduate Careers Australia conducts a range of research projects which examine the experience of higher education students and graduates. A new GCA research project is exploring the expectations of current students as well as recording the experiences of recent graduates as they move from higher education into the labour market or on to further study. The outlook for graduates is very positive."

For further information: Bruce Guthrie, GCA Research Manager, (02) 6367 5347.

⁶ Table 22 in the *Graduate Destinations 2006 report*.

⁷ Table 23 in the *Graduate Destinations 2006 report*.

⁸ Table 21 in the *Graduate Destinations 2006 report*.

⁹ Table 2a in the *Graduate Destinations 2006 report*.

¹⁰ Table 9 in the *Graduate Course Experience 2006 report*.