

Media Release: **Postgraduate Outcomes**

Embargoed until 11:30 pm, Tuesday, August 9, 2011

Postgraduate degrees pay dividends in uncertain market

Employment prospects for new postgraduates remained relatively positive in 2010, according to new research findings from the Australian Graduate Survey (AGS).

The research, conducted by Graduate Careers Australia, revealed that around 86 per cent of postgraduates who were available for full-time employment were in full-time employment four months after the completion of their studies, marginally down from around 87 per cent in 2009, and 90 per cent in 2008.

GCA Senior Research Associate Mr Graeme Bryant explained that while these figures were marginally lower in 2010 (relative to 2009 and 2008), when taken in context they are still a positive reflection of the added value of postgraduate study.

“Employment figures of 86 per cent for postgraduates in 2010 are around 10 percentage points higher than the equivalent figure of 76 per cent for bachelor degree graduates”, Mr Bryant explained. “While bachelor degree employment figures have fallen by around nine percentage points over the past 2 years, employment figures for postgraduates have only fallen by four percentage points over the same period.”

The research also found that the median salary for new postgraduates grew by 2.0 per cent between 2009 and 2010, reaching an overall level of \$70,000.

Other notable findings from the reports include:

- Postgraduates who had studied part-time were more likely to be in full-time employment four months after graduation than those who studied full-time.
- Of those postgraduates working full-time, 22.5 per cent were working in their first full-time jobs.
- Postgraduates in their first full-time jobs earned less, on average, than those postgraduates who had previous full-time employment experience.
- Male postgraduates earned more, on average, than their female counterparts (\$80,000 compared with \$65,000). This was particularly noticeable for graduates from Coursework Masters courses (\$85,000 for males compared with \$70,000 for females).
- Nine per cent of domestic Research Masters / PhD graduates were working overseas at the time of the survey (compared with 3.6 per cent for all postgraduates and 1.6 per cent of bachelor graduates).

Further information and comment

For further information please refer to the attached Media Backgrounder. Copies of the recently released report, *Postgraduate Destinations 2010*, can be downloaded at <http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/Research/ResearchReports/PostgraduateDestinations/>

For comment please contact Mr Graeme Bryant (Senior Research Associate) on (03) 9605 3710.

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The Survey

The Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) is conducted annually with all Australian universities and a number of smaller private institutions participating. In the 2010 AGS, over 161,000 new domestic graduates were invited to respond to the survey four months after they had completed requirements for their awards. Almost 100,000 did so, giving a response rate of 61.8 per cent.

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In 2010, 86.3 per cent of domestic postgraduate that were available for full-time employment (i.e. in or wanting to be in full-time employment) were in full-time employment at the time of the survey. That is marginally down from 87.4 per cent in 2009 and 89.9 per cent in 2010. The equivalent employment rate for domestic bachelor graduates was 76.2 per cent in 2010 – down from 85.2 per cent in 2008, highlighting a larger decline in employment rates for bachelor graduates over recent years than for postgraduates.

Of the remaining postgraduates available for full-time employment, 7.8 per cent were working part-time or casually while looking for employment and 5.9 per cent not working while looking for full-time employment.

Of those postgraduates not wanting to find full-time employment, 5.0 per cent were in full-time study at the time of the survey, 13.6 per cent were in or seeking part-time or casual employment, and 5.8 per cent were unavailable for work or study.

Also:

- Employment rates for males were higher than for females at Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate and Masters Coursework levels (90.1 per cent compared with 87.3 per cent, and 85.8 per cent compared with 83.8 per cent respectively), but marginally higher for females than males at the Research Masters / PhD level (85.0 per cent compared with 84.7 per cent) {see Table 4 on page 4 of the full report}
- Females were more likely to be working in their first full-time job than males at the Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate and Masters Coursework levels {see Table 4 on page 4 of the full report }
- Males were more likely to be working overseas than females at all levels {see Table 4 on page 4}
- More postgraduates were employed in the private sector (38.4 per cent) than any other sector {see Table 8 on page 14 of the full report }
 - Postgraduate Diploma / Certificate graduates and Coursework Masters graduates were most likely to be employed in the private sector (32.4 per cent and 46.8 per cent respectively)
 - Research Masters / PhD graduates were most likely to be employed in the education sector (46.1 per cent)
- Domestic postgraduates earned a median salary of \$70,000. By contrast, bachelor degree graduates earned \$50,000 on average {see Table 10 on page 18 of the full report }

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- The median age of a new postgraduate was 34 years of age, compared with bachelors degree median age of 23 years of age {see Table M in supplementary tables to the full report }

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