

News

## Solo dads favour full-time work

By Deborah Field

SINGLE dads in Sutherland Shire prefer to work full-time.

None of the 26 dads with dependent children looking for work in the week before the 2011 census were seeking a part-time role, figures from the Australian Bureau of Statistics showed.

In stark contrast, 200 of the 292 unemployed single mums of dependent children looking for work were seeking a part-time job.

Kathryn MacMillian, the managing director of Nine2Three Employment Solutions in Sutherland, a recruitment company that matches employees with flexible-type roles in accounting and administration, was not surprised by the findings, saying most of her single-parent clients were women seeking part-time roles.

"Culturally, the traditional roles for men and women have been around the men as the breadwinner and the mother as the nurturer and carer," Ms MacMillian said.

"Even though things have moved on from there, there's still that very strong perception and many men feel they have to bring in the majority of the salary.

"Women full-stop deal with a lot of guilt when working, but when they're at home then there's guilt about not working to help the family."

When it came to how accommodating employers were with flexible work hours and leave for single parents, Ms MacMillian said it often depended on the



**Daddy daycare:** Kathryn MacMillian said for many single dads, remaining in full-time employment was a way to maintain normalcy after a relationship breakdown. **Picture: Belinda Pratten**

### ... but mums prefer part-time

size and sector of a company, and those in charge.

"Management styles have certainly changed and the style of savvy employers these days isn't about measuring an employee's worth by whether they are still at their desk after 6pm but by their contribution.

"A lot more people are working

remotely and there's a lot more connectivity though technology."

There were 687 single working dads in the shire, of which 551 worked full-time and 113 worked part-time, the census figures showed.

A total of 4243 single mums with dependent children were employed, of whom 1940 worked

full-time and 2119 worked part-time.

There were more single parents of dependent children aged five to nine and 15 to 17 employed in the labour force than those with dependent children of other ages between zero and 24.

**What employment challenges do you face as a single parent?**

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