

# 3.7 MILLION AUSTRALIANS NOW FREELANCE, NEW STUDY FINDS

Australia's first study into all forms of freelancing found 30% of workers are freelancing\*, contributing \$51 billion\*\* to the economy each year

Freelancing is an attractive career choice, with Gen Y and Baby Boomers leading the trend

Australia - Thursday 16th October, 2014: Thirty per cent of the workforce - 3.7 million Australians - are now freelancing, according to a new survey. The study, "Freelancing in Australia: A National Survey of the New Workforce", was conducted by leading online work marketplace Elance-oDesk and is the first study of its kind to look at all types of freelancing in Australia across all types of professions.

"Freelancing in all its forms - from full-time, independent freelancers to those people doing it part-time or on the side - isn't something that has been valued before. This study highlights the growth and importance of freelancing in Australia, contributing \$51 billion to the economy each year. The data also shows us that freelancing is seen as an attractive career choice. Technology is a key driver here, with over half (59%) of freelancers stating that technology is making freelancing easier. The connected era is removing barriers and liberating our workforce. A more diverse and flexible workforce will be the new norm," said Kyri Theos, Australian Country Manager of Elance-oDesk.

## KEY FINDINGS

The economic impact of the 3.7 million Australians who are freelancing is significant - collectively, they contribute more than \$51 billion in freelance earnings to the national economy. That impact is expected to grow in the coming years.

Findings show that: Freelancing is an attractive career - Over half (58%) of those freelancing do so out of choice, and more than a third of freelancers say they are earning more money than before they started freelancing. The top reasons for freelancing are: 1. To earn extra money, 2. To have a flexible schedule, and 3. To have the freedom to choose which projects to work on. 31% of moonlighters - professionals with a primary job who also freelance on the side - have thought about quitting to work completely independently and almost three quarters of non-freelancers would be willing to do additional work outside of their primary job if it was available and enabled them to make more money. Gen Ys and Baby Boomers are leading the freelancing trend - Over a third of Gen Ys and over 55s are freelancing (compared to 25% for other age groups). Technology is making freelancing easier - Over half (59%) of freelancers said technology is making freelancing easier, and 64% agreed that social media is drastically changing the dynamics of networking in the freelancer market. Of those freelancers working online (who found and performed the work via the internet), half find projects in three days or less. The outlook for freelancing is positive - A third of freelancers expect their income to increase in the coming year. Over half (58%) said freelancing as a career path is more respected today than it was three years ago and agreed freelancers offer skills that might be difficult to find traditionally (59%). Also, the majority (71%) of freelancers said the best days for freelancing are still ahead of them. FIVE FREELANCER SEGMENTS

The study identified five segments of freelancers, covering the diverse range of people who are freelancing today: Independent Contractors (35% of the independent workforce / almost 1.3 million professionals) – These "traditional" freelancers don't have an employer and instead do freelance, temporary or supplemental work on a project-to-project basis. Moonlighters (19% / almost 704,000) - Professionals with a primary, traditional job who also moonlight doing freelance work. For example, a corporate-employed web developer who also does projects for non-profits in the evening. Diversified Workers (23% / almost 852,000) – People with multiple sources of income from a mix of traditional employers and freelance work. For example, someone who works the front desk at a dentist's office 20 hours a week and fills out the rest of his income driving for Uber and doing freelance writing. Temporary Workers (20% / almost 741,000) - Individuals with a single employer, client, job or contract project where their status is temporary. For example, a business strategy consultant working for one startup client on a contract basis for a months-long project. Freelance Business Owners (3% / almost 111,000) – Business owners with between one and five employees who consider themselves both a freelancer and a business owner. For example, a social marketing guru who hires a team of other social marketers to build a small agency, but still identifies as a freelancer. ENDS

Notes to editors

\* These are people who have engaged in supplemental, temporary, project- or contract-based work within the past 12 months.

\*\* \$51 billion is the estimated earnings for all freelancing work, including those earnings made by people who freelancing part-time or on the side. This

figure just relates to the income generated from freelancing, not from other jobs these people receive income from.

About the “Freelancing in Australia” Study:

To learn more about this study, see our results deck here:

<http://www.slideshare.net/oDesk/freelancing-in-australia-a-national-survey-of-the-new-workforce-40284354>

For the study, Elance-oDesk commissioned independent research firm Edelman Berland to survey more than 1,049 working Australian adults over the age of 18 between July 19, 2014 – July 31, 2014. Of those, 311 were freelancers and 738 were non-freelancers. Results are weighted to ensure demographic representation in line with the Australian Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey. The study has an overall margin of error of  $\pm 3.04\%$  at the 95% level of confidence.

About Elance-oDesk

Elance-oDesk is creating the world's largest online workplaces. Cumulatively, 3.7 million businesses and 9.3 million freelancers have tapped into [www.Elance.com](http://www.Elance.com) and [www.oDesk.com](http://www.oDesk.com) to access talent via the Internet.

As an increasingly connected and independent workforce goes online, talent—like software, shopping and communications before it—is shifting to the cloud. This shift is making it faster and easier for businesses to hire for the skills they need, when they need them, while freeing professionals from set time and place work.

Freelancers are expected to earn more than \$900 million in 2014 via Elance and oDesk. Elance-oDesk is headquartered in Mountain View, California, with offices in San Francisco, California and Oslo, Norway.