

# Mining industry super duo prove job sharing's a win-win

31% of Australians are working part time, and that number is set to rise as more seek out flexible working arrangements.

Brisbane, 13 November 2019. Part time work. Work from home days. Job Sharing. Flexible working arrangements are on the rise in Australia ... and they're here to stay. But many Australian employers, particularly large organisations, are hesitant or struggle to implement job sharing. Citing concerns such as lowered productivity, lack of supervision and feelings of unfairness among other employees, as well as IT security, possible impacts on customer service and the implications of flexible working on team dynamics.

Catherine and Kristy are set to prove them wrong. Catherine and Kristy have been job sharing since 2017. As part of Australia's rising share of part time workers (31% in 2018, up from 25% in 1998), they're on the leading edge of the flexible working arrangements wave. And they're on the leading edge of how to make job sharing really work.

'From day one, everything we did, said or delivered was from 'us'', says Catherine. 'We trust each other. If we didn't, this relationship definitely wouldn't work!'

Both Kristy and Catherine were working in the mining industry in senior roles, Kristy as a Project Management Office (PMO) Lead and Catherine as a Senior Advisor Project Finance, when they met. Like many women, they were reluctant to return to full time work after having families, but they also didn't want to lose the careers they had worked so hard to obtain. When Kristy was approached for a job-sharing role, she accepted on the condition she could work with Catherine.

So, what makes it work?

- They have a professional charter. 'We understand who our customer is, we know our expectations, we provide service and we are reputable', say Catherine and Kristy.
- They have systems in place to ensure that to do items are carried over and prioritised as needed.
- They respond as one. They use a single mailbox so that all work items and necessary emails can be actioned by either one of them.
- They know each other's strengths and weaknesses.

And the benefits to both themselves and their employer have been more than they could even have imagined. Rather than being less productive, their mining employer now has the benefit of a larger range of skills across two people, as well as a 'get the job done' mentality which far exceeds the average worker who generally has a five-day work week to accomplish projects. When either Kristy or Catherine take annual leave, there is still a person available who understands what is necessary for the role and is able to manage things while the other is away. Plus, they keep each other accountable.

'Our output is far higher with much greater visibility than with your average full-time worker, but without the need for management micromanaging', Catherine adds. 'In fact, our management is absolutely speechless by how successful our job share has been.'

Of course, job sharing has had benefits for Catherine and Kristy as well, allowing them time with their families, while still maintaining their careers. It's also given them the flexibility to follow other passions in their lives. In this case, those passions are in the form of a children's design and décor shop, Homely Creatures. In fact, Homely Creatures is actually their second job share as they own and run it together.

'We were looking for a gap in the children's industry, something that we could feel good about aligning ourselves with', Catherine says. 'The opportunity to buy Homely Creatures arose and we decided it was a risk worth taking!'

Kristy and Catherine are passionate about bringing awareness and hope to others that may want to job share, as well as educating companies about the benefits and the process that can make job sharing a true success.

Catherine says, 'I have heard so many men and women complain about how hard it is to find part time work or a company that is willing to discuss job sharing opportunities with them. So many just find it too difficult.'

'The job sharing arrangement is still very immature within our company, but we are determined to help move it out of our department and into the global company and then out of the company into other companies in Australia', Kristy adds.

'Job sharing allows valuable workers who may only want or be able to do part time work back into the workforce. It makes us smarter and stronger as a whole. And it brings more skills and opportunities to businesses as well', Kristy says.

About Catherine and Kristy: Catherine Goos grew up on a cattle crop farm in Central Queensland riding dirt bikes and sliding down the banks of a clay dam. She relocated to Brisbane (a long time ago!) and now calls New Farm home. She started her working life in the tourism industry, but it wasn't long before she jumped ship for the finance world. She has a passion for interior design, renovating homes and her family, including husband Kris and three-year-old son, Jack.

Kristy Wong was born in Adelaide but made her way to Darwin via the middle of Australia, living in an underground house in Coober Pedy as well as Alice Springs. She came to Brisbane for university and this is where her love of technology was born. Her first 'real' job was at the Queensland Police where she started as a Graduate Database administrator but quickly moved up the corporate ladder to senior positions, including Quality Assurance Officer and Project Manager. This sent her to her current role in the mining industry. Kristy also has a passion for supporting families with premature babies, as her and her husband Ivan's own twin girls were born in 2016 at only 27 weeks and 6 days.

\*Catherine and Kristy are available for interviews.\*

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