

Women in Australia



Women in Australia are diverse, educated and hard-working

- 3.8 per cent are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander¹
- 28.3 per cent were born overseas² and 48.5 per cent have a parent born overseas³
- 29.3 per cent are under the age of 25 and 18.0 per cent are 65 and over⁴
- 17.8 per cent are women with disability⁵
- 27.6 per cent live in regional or remote Australia⁶
- 4.6 per cent identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual⁷
- 64 per cent hold a qualification outside school and 35.7 per cent hold a bachelor degree or above⁸
- Australia has the 4th highest level of tertiary educated women in the OECD⁹
- 60.4 per cent of women over the age of 15 are employed¹⁰
- On average, women aged 15 to 64 years do 55.4 hours of work a week, 2 hours more than men¹¹

Gender attitudes and stereotypes



Community attitudes and beliefs about gender in Australia

- One in three (34.8 per cent) Australians hold a negative bias about women's ability to participate economically, politically or in education¹²
- Attitudes towards gender equality are not more progressive in younger Australians (aged 16 – 24 years old); their rejection of gender inequality is the same as the average Australian¹³
- 43 per cent of young women (aged 16 – 24 years old) reject attitudes that underpin gender inequality compared to 20 per cent of young men¹⁴

Gender stereotypes

- In couple families where the youngest dependent is 0-4 years old, 90.6 per cent of male partners were employed compared to 69.5 per cent of female partners¹⁵
- Women are less likely than men to hold traditional attitudes towards parenting and work, and show more support for female-breadwinning family models than men¹⁶

Gender-based violence



- One in five women and one in 16 men have experienced sexual violence since the age of 15¹⁷
- Over half of female victims of sexual assault are under 18 years old; one in three are aged between 18 and 34 years¹⁸
- One in six women and one in 13 men have experienced economic abuse by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15¹⁹
- One in four women and one in seven men have experienced emotional abuse by a current or previous cohabiting partner since the age of 15²⁰
- 57 per cent of women who recently experienced sexual harassment experienced it electronically (such as online or on a phone)²¹
- 68 per cent of migrant and refugee women have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in the last 5 years²²
- Women who identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or who used a different term such as asexual, pansexual or queer were more likely to have experienced sexual violence (13 per cent) than women who identified as heterosexual (2.4 per cent)²³
- The rate of family and domestic violence hospitalisations for people living in very remote areas is 48 times higher than for those living in major cities²⁴
- The rate of family violence hospitalisations for First Nations women is 33 times higher than for non-Indigenous women²⁵
- 62.2 per cent of the Australian population have experienced at least one type of child maltreatment²⁶
 - › Girls are more than twice as likely to experience child sexual abuse as boys, and 1.5 times more likely to experience emotional abuse²⁷
- People who have experienced childhood abuse were more likely to go on to experience violence and abuse by a partner as an adult (42.8 per cent) than those who have not experienced childhood abuse (17.4 per cent).²⁸ Research also shows a connection between sexual offences and adverse childhood experiences of male youth who offend²⁹

Unpaid and paid care



Unpaid work and care

- 83 per cent of one parent families are single mothers³⁰
- Women do over 9 hours a week more unpaid work and care than men³¹
- Female parents do 1 hour and 15 minutes more unpaid child care a day than male parents³²
- Of the different types of child care provided by parents of children under 15 years³³:
 - › 70 per cent of women engaged in the physical and emotional care of children compared to 42 per cent of men
 - › 51 per cent of women spent time playing, reading or talking with a child compared to 38 per cent of men
 - › 40 per cent of women participated in feeding and food preparation for children compared to 17 per cent of men

Barriers to work

- 35.7 per cent of women cite caring for children as the main reason they are unavailable to start work or work more hours, compared to 7.3 per cent of men³⁴
- Of parents with children under 15 years, 67.6 per cent of mothers and 39.5 per cent of fathers reported the most important incentive to join or increase participation in the workforce was the ability to work part-time hours³⁵

Part-time and flexible work

- 43.3 per cent of women work part-time and 19.5 per cent of men work part-time³⁶
- 54 per cent of employed women with disability work part-time and 28 per cent of employed men with disability work part-time³⁷

Who is accessing paid parental leave

- 21 per cent of private sector organisations offer equal paid parental leave to women and men³⁸
- 14 per cent of employer-funded paid primary carers leave is taken by men and 86 per cent is taken by women³⁹

Men's representation in the care economy workforce

- Men make up 20.3 per cent of the care economy workforce⁴⁰
- Men working in the care economy earn \$104.40 a week more than women on average, a pay gap of 8 per cent⁴¹

The Government is committed to continually improving intersectionality of data and recognises that limitations in current data impacts our ability to measure all people's experiences of inequality.

Where possible, and increasingly over time, information will be disaggregated to measure progress towards gender equality for First Nations people; culturally and linguistically diverse people; migrant and refugee people; people with disability; LGBTIQ+ people; people in rural, regional and remote communities; children and young people; and older people.

2024 Status of Women Report Card – Expanded Data

Economic equality and security



The gender pay gap

- The national gender pay gap, based on full-time average weekly earnings, is 12 per cent (\$238 per week)⁴²; women would need to work an additional 44 days a year to earn the same as men⁴³
- When comparing full-time equivalent total remuneration of private sector employees, which includes superannuation, bonuses, overtime and other payments, the median gender pay gap is 19 per cent (\$18,461 per year)⁴⁴
- The estimated median weekly total personal income for First Nations women is \$517.47, a gap of 23.7% (\$160.80) compared to non-Indigenous women and 47.8% (\$473.73) compared to all men⁴⁵
- Women who change from partnered to single experience a 16.7 per cent reduction in household income (compared to a 0.2 per cent reduction for men)⁴⁶
 - › Mothers who change from partnered to single mother households experience a 20 per cent decline in household income⁴⁷

Industry and occupation gender segregation

- 54.2 per cent of all workers work in either male or female dominated industries⁴⁸
- Women are underrepresented in construction, making up 13.2 per cent of the workforce⁴⁹
- Men are underrepresented in health care and social assistance, making up 23.6 per cent of the workforce⁵⁰
- Women represent 17 per cent of STEM study enrolments and 10 per cent of architecture and building study enrolments in vocational education and training⁵¹
- Men represent 25 per cent of health study enrolments at university and 20 per cent of education study enrolments in vocational education and training⁵²
- 60.8 per cent of managers are men, while 71.8 per cent of clerical and administrative workers are women⁵³

Workplace gender discrimination and sexual harassment

- 79 per cent of employers have a general gender equality policy in place⁵⁴
- 98.5 per cent of employers have a policy or strategy on prevention and response to sexual harassment, harassment on the grounds of sex or discrimination⁵⁵
- 26 per cent of women who recently experienced sexual harassment experienced it at work⁵⁶
- 46 per cent of migrant and refugee women have experienced at least one form of sexual harassment in the workplace in the last five years⁵⁷
- 18 per cent of people who experienced workplace sexual harassment made a formal report or complaint about the harassment⁵⁸
 - › Of people who made a formal report or complaint, 40 per cent said that no changes were made at their workplace. This was more common for complaints lodged by women (45 per cent), than by men (30 per cent)⁵⁹

Retirement

- In 2020-21, the average age at retirement from the paid labour force was 54 for women and 59.3 for men⁶⁰
- The gap in median superannuation balances for women and men approaching retirement (ages 60-64) is 25.1 per cent (or \$53,190)⁶¹
- 34 per cent of retired women rely on their partner's income to meet their living costs at retirement (compared to 7 per cent of retired men)⁶²

Housing and homelessness

- 122,494 people were estimated to be experiencing homelessness on Census night in 2021; 44.1 per cent of these people were women⁶³
- The majority of homelessness services clients are women (59 per cent)⁶⁴

Women-owned businesses

- 41.6 per cent of small businesses are owned by women⁶⁵
- 18 per cent of total start-up capital was invested in start-ups with at least one woman founder in 2023⁶⁶

Health



Health care

- 52.3 per cent of competitive grants funded by the National Health and Medical Research Council in 2023 went to women⁶⁷
- Almost one in four women (23.8 per cent) and one in five men (19.9 per cent) have multiple chronic health conditions⁶⁸
- Women are more likely than men to see a GP (86.9 per cent compared to 77.6 per cent) or medical specialist (40.5 per cent compared to 35.1 per cent)⁶⁹
- 73.9 per cent of women and 73.9 per cent of men over 65 years report their health as good or excellent/very good⁷⁰
- 55 per cent of women experiencing menopause symptoms reported negative impacts on their mental and emotional wellbeing, while 32 per cent reported negative impacts on their relationship with their partner⁷¹
- 24 per cent of women did not discuss symptoms they attributed to menopause with a doctor because they didn't think anything could be done⁷²

Access to maternal, sexual and reproductive health care

- On average, endometriosis takes between 6 and 8 years from onset of symptoms to diagnosis⁷³
- 5.7 per cent of women reported problems with their fertility; 63.1 per cent of these women sought help⁷⁴
- The average out-of-pocket expense for assisted reproductive technologies is \$7,535 per woman⁷⁵

Mental health

- Almost a third of women aged 15 to 34 years were diagnosed with depression and/or anxiety in 2021, with rates increasing, particularly for women and young people, between 2009 and 2021⁷⁶
- Women are more likely than men to see a health professional for their mental health (21.6 per cent of women and 12.9 per cent of men)⁷⁷
- Women have higher rates of recent self-harm (2.2 per cent) as well as self-harm over the lifetime (10.4 per cent) than men (1.2 per cent recent and 6.8 per cent over lifetime)⁷⁸
- In 2022, the highest suicide rates for men occurred in those aged 85 and over, and those aged 45-49 (32.7 and 32.6 deaths per 100,000, respectively). The highest suicide rate for women was in those aged 85 and over (10.6 per 100,000)⁷⁹
- The rate of death by suicide for First Nations women is 2.5 times the rate for non-Indigenous women⁸⁰

Leadership, representation and decision making



Women's representation in leadership and decision making

- Women hold 51.6 per cent of Australian Government board positions⁸¹
- The proportion of women in Parliament is 44.7 per cent⁸²
- 9 per cent of CEOs in the ASX300 are women⁸³
- 18 per cent of CEO pipeline roles in the ASX300 are held by women⁸⁴
- Two in five managers are women (40.2 per cent)⁸⁵
- 13.8 per cent of all managers work part-time and 59.5 per cent of those are women⁸⁶
- 44.9 per cent of judicial officers are women⁸⁷
- 60.4 per cent of the Australian Public Service are women, with women holding 53.4 per cent of Senior Executive Service roles⁸⁸

Women's participation and representation in sport and the media

- 32 per cent of women and 48 per cent of men participate in sport at least once a week⁸⁹
- In July 2022 women represented 30 per cent of sources and experts quoted in news media⁹⁰
- In 2019, 24 of the top 100 songs played on Australian radio across 58 stations were by solo female artists, compared to 55 by solo male artists⁹¹
- 2023 was the first time ever that there were more works by women (30) than men (27) in the Archibald Prize finalists⁹²

Women and the Australian honours system

- In the 2024 Australia Day Honours List, women received 50.5 per cent of Order of Australia awards⁹³
- In the 2023 King's Birthday Honours List, women received 50.5 per cent of Order of Australia awards⁹⁴

Australia is ranked 26th for gender equality internationally⁹⁵

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