

Women in Australia are diverse, educated and hardworking

Of all women in Australia:

- **3.8%** are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander¹
- **28.3%** were born overseas²
- **48.5%** have a parent born overseas³
- **29.2%** are under the age of 25⁴
- **18.3%** are 65 years and over⁵
- **21.8%** are women with disability⁶
- **27.6%** live in regional or remote Australia⁷
- **3.8%** are estimated to identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or use a different term such as asexual, pansexual or queer⁸



What's changed?

Australia is ranked 24th for gender equality internationally⁹

Australians are increasingly rejecting problematic beliefs about gender equality and Australians' understanding of violence against women has improved since 2013¹⁰

The proportion of women who had experienced violence in the last 12 months from an intimate partner decreased from **1.5%** in 2012 to **0.9%** in 2021–22¹¹

- **3.9%** of women had recently experienced emotional abuse in 2021–22, down from **4.7%** in 2012¹²
- **2.3%** of women had recently experienced economic abuse in 2021–22¹³



Men are taking more parental leave; **17%** of primary carer parental leave is taken by men, up from **5%** in 2016–17¹⁴

68% of employers now offer paid parental leave, up from **48%** in 2015–16¹⁵



Use of paid childcare by couples with children under the age of 5 has significantly increased over the last 10 years; from **42%** in 2010–12, to **55.2%** in 2021–22¹⁶

Women's workforce participation reached a record high of **63.5%** in January 2025, compared to **58.6%** 10 years ago¹⁷



Women make up only **39.6%** of full-time workers, a small increase from **35.6%** 10 years ago¹⁸



In 2024, **63.6%** of women held a non-school qualification and **36.9%** held a bachelor degree or above, up from **57.4%** and **27.6%** in 2015¹⁹

The national gender pay gap is **11.9%**, down from a record-high of **18.6%** 10 years ago²⁰

Between women and men retirees, the gap in average age at retirement has decreased from **8.4 years** in 2012–13 to **4.7 years** in 2022–23. On average, women retire at **54.7 years** and men retire at **59.4 years**²¹



Between women and men, the superannuation gap has narrowed from **24.6%** in 2014–15 to **21.3%** in 2021–22²²

At the opening of the 47th parliament in 2022, **44%** of federal parliamentarians were women, up from **31%** at the opening of the 44th parliament in 2013²³

Women now hold **54.4%** of all Australian Government board positions, up from **39.1%** in 2015²⁴

On private sector boards, women's representation has increased from **23.7%** in 2013–14 to **32%** in 2023–24²⁵



Where are we now?

Gender-based violence

37 women were killed by a current or former intimate partner in 2024²⁶

Nearly one in 3 female victims of homicide in 2024 identified as First Nations²⁷



Women are **30–45%** more likely to experience high financial stress if they had experienced sexual violence than women of the same age who hadn't experienced violence²⁸

One in 2 women and one in 4 men working in retail have experienced sexual harassment, with young women under the age of 25 most likely to be targeted²⁹

Economic equality and security



When comparing full-time equivalent total remuneration of private sector employees, which includes superannuation, bonuses, overtime, other payments but excluding CEO remuneration, the average gender pay gap is **21.1%**³⁰

90% of large private sector employers have a policy or strategy to support gender equality in the workplace³¹



Leadership, representation and decision making

In the private sector, the CEO and head of business gender pay gap is **27.1%**³²

In media, women make up **49%** of the workforce, but hold only **30%** of CEO roles³³

39% of women participate in cultural activities, such as visual arts, music, dance and craft, compared to **25%** of men³⁴

Unpaid and paid care



On average, women do 32 hours of unpaid work and care a week, 9 hours more than men. Women do more unpaid work than men across all demographics and the share is highest for:



- women in a couple family with a child under 15 years (47 hours a week)
- women in the lowest quintile of household income (40 hours a week)
- single mothers (40 hours a week)³⁵

On average, First Nations women undertake 11.5 hours per day caring for others and/or caring for Country and culture. Unpaid care is often viewed as strength and something to be deeply valued³⁶

Health

Women are more likely to use health care services than men and are more likely to face higher healthcare costs over time³⁷



4 in 5 Australian women aged 18–44 years have experienced chronic menstrual symptoms in the last 5 years and almost half have missed days of work or study as a result³⁸



One in 4 women aged 45–64 years report that symptoms attributed to menopause make it hard to do daily activities³⁹

The leading causes of loss of healthy life for women are dementia, anxiety disorders, and back pain. For men, they are coronary heart disease, back pain, and suicide⁴⁰

First Nations women

New analysis shows that First Nations women have strong connections to family, community and culture:

- **98%** are proud of their culture and of being Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- **76%** recognise an area as a homeland or traditional country and of these, **29%** live on homeland or traditional country



- **67%** identify with a tribal group, language, clan, mission or regional group
- **46%** are satisfied or very satisfied with the level of their own knowledge of culture
- **8%** speak an Aboriginal language or a Torres Strait Islander language as their main language at home⁴¹



Endnotes

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