

Australian women are working more than ever, with workforce participation reaching a record yearly average of **63.1%** in 2025. More women are stepping into leadership roles, and access to education and healthcare is improving. But there are areas where progress is too slow. Australian women still shoulder most unpaid care, face high rates of intimate partner violence, and continue to earn less than men. While we have made significant progress, there is more work to do.



Australia is ranked 13th for gender equality internationally – its highest score ever.¹



Attitudes and norms

9 in 10 Australians say gender equality is important.²

6 in 10 Australians believe we are close to or have already achieved equality.³

Between **60%** and **63%** of boys and girls believe that most people in Australia expect teenage boys to be manly, confident, and strong at all times.⁴

Almost **1 in 5** young adults think it's reasonable to expect to track a romantic partner whenever they want.⁵



Gender-based violence

The intimate partner homicide rate fell by **35.6%** between 2023-24 and 2024-25.



However, **28** women were killed by a current or former intimate partner in 2025,⁶ and **1 in 4** women (23%) have experienced intimate partner violence since age 15.⁷

First Nations women experience higher rates of violence, with nearly **1 in 3** female victims of intimate partner homicide in 2025 identifying as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.⁸

1 in 5 women (22%) have experienced sexual violence,⁹ and **49%** of LGBTQIA+ people have experienced sexual assault (mostly perpetrated by cisgender men).¹⁰

55% of people with disability have experienced physical or sexual abuse since age 15.¹¹ Women with disability were more likely than women without disability to have experienced emotional abuse by a partner (**7.0%** versus 4.6%).¹²

More Australians understand the signs of family violence and are seeking the help they need. 1800RESPECT received over **294,000 contacts** in 2023-24, and the Men's Referral Service received over **7,000 helpline calls** in 2022-23.¹³



Unpaid and paid care

Dads are spending more time with their children. **20%** of primary carer parental leave recipients in medium and large private sector employers,¹⁴ and **33%** of new government funded Paid Parental Leave recipients were men in 2024-25.¹⁵

Use of paid care for children under 5 continues to rise, with **56%** of families relying on paid care in 2023.



While nearly **1 in 3** families with children under 5 rely on grandparent care.¹⁶



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are **driving growth** in the number of people employed in high skilled professional roles including health, education and welfare, policy, advertising, and environmental science.¹⁷

Following wage increases, more men have joined the aged and disabled care workforce in the last year compared to women (growth rate of **6.2%** versus 2.1%).¹⁸



Economic equality and security



The national gender pay gap is continuing to narrow, currently sitting at **11.5%**.¹⁹ The gap is **21.1%** for total remuneration within medium and large employers.²⁰

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women have the highest gender pay gap, earning **35.3%** less than all Australian men, but the gap is decreasing.²¹

4 in 5 Australians work in either female or male dominated occupations – a key contributor to skills shortages and the gender pay gap.²²



Women made up approximately **62%** of Fee Free TAFE enrolments from January 2023 to September 2025,²³ and **46%** of all VET enrolments from January 2023 to December 2024.²⁴

55% of social housing program occupants are women.²⁵

Single-women households make up around **52%** of those eligible for the maximum rate of Commonwealth Rent Assistance.²⁶

Health

Early access to antenatal care is rising, with **69.3%** of First Nations women, and **77.4%** of non-Indigenous women receiving care in the first trimester.²⁷



For the first time since records began in 1982, **no cervical cancer** cases were diagnosed in women under 25 years of age.²⁸

Mortality due to breast cancer declined by almost **30%** between 2000 and 2024.²⁹

More than **303,000** women have accessed new, cheaper contraceptives on the PBS in the last year.³⁰



Women spent around **\$373 million** more than men on GP services in 2024-25.³¹

Over **71,000** women accessed a menopause health assessment since 1 July 2025 when they first became covered by Medicare.³²



Women accessed **177 million** scripts on the PBS in 2024-25, compared to 150 million for men.³³



Leadership, representation and decision-making



33 women represented Australia at the 2026 Milano Cortina Winter Olympic games, making up **62.3%** of the team – the most women Australia has ever had compete at an Olympics.³⁴

At the opening of the 48th parliament in 2025, **49.6%** of federal parliamentarians were women, up from **44.5%** at the opening of the 47th parliament.³⁵

Australia scored **83 out of 100** on the new Gender Equality @ Work Index, with top performing dimensions including security, pay and participation.³⁶

Women account for **54.3%** of people on Australian Government boards.³⁷

In medium and large private sector employers, the share of women on boards and governing bodies has slightly shifted over the last 4 years, **31%** in 2020-21 to **33%** in 2024-25.³⁸

2026 Australian of the Year Katherine Bennell-Pegg is the **first astronaut** to qualify under the Australian flag.³⁹



Endnotes

- 1 World Economic Forum, [Global Gender Gap Report 2025](#), World Economic Forum, released April 2025, accessed 30 October 2025.
- 2 Plan International Australia, [Gender Compass Stage 2](#), Plan International Australia, released April 2025, accessed 31 October 2025.
- 3 Plan International Australia, Gender Compass Stage 2.
- 4 Jesuit Social Services, [The Adolescent Man Box](#), Jesuit Social Services, released November 2025, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 5 eSafety Commissioner, [Track, harass, repeat: Investigating attitudes that normalise tech-based coercive control](#), eSafety Commissioner, Australian Government, released May 2025, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 6 Australian Institute of Criminology (AIC), [Homicide in Australia](#), AIC website, released February 2026, accessed 24 February 2026. The AIC data covers cleared incidents of homicide perpetrated against a female by a male or female current or former intimate partner, drawn from state and territory police data. There are many other measures of the number of women killed by violence and femicide in Australia, which may be much broader.
- 7 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS), [Personal Safety, Australia](#), ABS website, reference period 2021–22, released March 2023, accessed 16 February 2026.
- 8 AIC, Homicide in Australia.
- 9 ABS, Personal Safety, Australia.
- 10 Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW), [Family domestic and sexual violence, LGBTIQ+ people](#), AIHW website, reference period 2019, last updated July 2025, accessed 6 February 2026.
- 11 Australian Government, Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability, [Final Report – Volume 3, Nature and extent of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation](#), Australian Government, released September 2023, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 12 Department of Health, Disability and Ageing (DHDA), [2024 update: Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2023](#), DHDA, Australian Government, released January 2025, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 13 AIHW, [Family, domestic and sexual violence, Helplines and related support services](#), AIHW website, reference period 2023–24, last updated November 2025, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 14 Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), [WGEA Gender Equality Scorecard 2024-25](#), WGEA, Australian Government, released November 2025, accessed 27 November 2025.
- 15 Department of Social Services (DSS), DSS administrative data, unpublished, last updated 31 December 2025, accessed 20 February 2026.
- 16 I LaB, F Botha, K Peyton and R Wilkins, [The Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia Survey: Selected Findings from Waves 1 to 23](#), Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research, The University of Melbourne, released September 2025, accessed 23 January 2026.
- 17 Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA), [New Perspectives on Old Problems: Gendered Jobs, Work and Pay](#), JSA, Australian Government, released August 2025, accessed 11 February 2026.
- 18 ABS, [Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, EQ08 – Employed persons by Occupation unit group of main job \(ANZSCO\), Sex, State and Territory, August 1986 onwards \(Pivot Table\)](#) [data set], ABS website, reference period December 2025, accessed 12 February 2026.
- 19 ABS, [Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, Table 2. Average weekly earnings, Australia \(dollars\) – seasonally adjusted](#) [data set], ABS website, reference period November 2025, accessed 26 February 2026.
- 20 WGEA, WGEA Gender Equality Scorecard 2024–25
- 21 JSA, New Perspectives on Old Problems: Gendered Jobs, Work and Pay.
- 22 JSA, New Perspectives on Old Problems: Gendered Jobs, Work and Pay.
- 23 Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR), [Fee-Free TAFE Program Snapshot – Quarter 3, 2025](#), DEWR website, released November 2025, accessed 13 February 2026.
- 24 National Centre for Vocational Education and Research (NCVER), [DataBuilder, Total VET students and courses, Students by gender](#) [data set], NCVER website, released September 2025, accessed 13 February 2026.
- 25 AIHW, [Housing assistance in Australia: Occupants](#), AIHW website, reference period 2023, last updated June 2025, accessed 11 November 2025.
- 26 DSS, [Women's Budget Statement 2025-26](#), DSS administrative data, last updated December 2025, accessed 20 February 2026.
- 27 AIHW, [Australia's mothers and babies: Antenatal care](#), AIHW website, reference period 2023, last updated July 2025, accessed 5 November 2025.
- 28 AIHW, [Cancer data in Australia: Cancer incidence by age visualisation](#), AIHW website, reference period 2021, last updated October 2025, accessed 23 January 2026; Centre of Research Excellence in Cervical Cancer Control (C4), 2025 Cervical Cancer Elimination Progress Report, C4, released November 2025, accessed 9 February 2026.
- 29 AIHW, [The health of women in Australia](#), AIHW website, reference period 2024, last updated November 2025, accessed 9 February 2026.
- 30 DHDA, PBS data for new contraceptives listed on the PBS from 1 March 2025 (drospirenone, drospirenone + ethinylestradiol, estetrol + drospirenone and etonogestrel + ethinylestradiol), unpublished, accessed 13 February 2026.
- 31 DHDA, Medicare data, unpublished, accessed 13 February 2026.
- 32 DHDA, Medicare data.
- 33 DHDA, [PBS Expenditure and Prescriptions Report 1 July 2024 to 30 June 2025](#), DHDA, Australian Government, released December 2025, accessed 13 February 2026.
- 34 Australian Olympic Committee, [Second largest Winter Team ever named](#), Australia Olympics website, released January 2026, accessed 16 February 2026.
- 35 ABS, [Representation in parliament](#), ABS website, released September 2025, accessed 6 November 2025.
- 36 E Hill, R Cooper, S Seetahul & A Bedi, [Gender Equality @ Work Index Report](#), The Australian Centre for Gender Equality @ Work, 2025, released November 2025, accessed 16 February 2026.
- 37 Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C), [Gender balance on Australian Government boards Report 2024–25](#), PM&C, Australian Government, released February 2026, accessed 4 February 2026.
- 38 WGEA, WGEA Gender Equality Scorecard 2024–25.
- 39 National Australia Day Council, [Australian of the Year Awards 2026](#), Australian of the Year Awards website, accessed 12 February 2026.