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Gender segregation in Australia’s workforce



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Summary

The Australian labour market is highly gender-segregated by industry and occupation, a pattern that has persisted over the past two decades.

This paper looks at the features of 'female-dominated' and 'male-dominated' organisations, while highlighting the unequal distribution of women and men across industries and occupations.

Data is sourced from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) dataset (2014-15 reporting period),¹ and from the Australian Bureau of Statistics' (ABS) Labour Force Quarterly Survey (May 1995 and May 2015 periods).²



Key findings

- Occupational gender segregation has remained persistent over the last 20 years.
- Traditionally female-dominated industries (*Health Care and Social Assistance* and *Education and Training*) have seen the proportion of women increase further.
- Some male-dominated industries (*Construction* and *Wholesale Trade*) recorded a decline in female representation, while others (including *Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services* and *Transport, Postal and Warehousing*) recorded growth.
- Although men dominate in leadership roles across all industries, women are substantially more likely to hold CEO or key management personnel roles in female-dominated industries than male-dominated industries.
- Average remuneration in female-dominated organisations is lower than in male-dominated organisations. However female managers working in male-dominated organisations are more likely to earn salaries closer to their male colleagues.
- Performance pay and other additional remuneration plays a greater role in male-dominated industries, leading to higher gender pay gaps for total remuneration.
- There has been a substantial increase in the proportion of female managers in what remains a male-dominated occupation (up from 30.1% to 37.1%).
- On an occupational level, male-dominated workplaces have smaller proportions of part-time employees while full-time employees tend to work longer hours - attributes that may deter people with family and caring responsibilities.

¹ WGEA (2016), Agency reporting data, 2014-15 reporting period; WGEA & BCEC (2016), *Gender Equity Insights 2016: Inside Australia's Gender pay Gap*, BCEC | WGEA Gender Equity Series. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC_WGEA_Gender_Pay_Equity_Insights_2016_Report.pdf

² ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 27 August 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>



Gender segregation in organisations

Table 1 breaks down the number of employees in the WGEA dataset (covering non-public sector organisations with 100 or more employees) by organisations that are classified as either:

- 'Female-dominated' (60% or more women)
- 'Male-dominated' (40% or less women)
- 'Mixed' (41% to 59% women).

The data shows that Australian employees are very likely to work in an organisation dominated by one gender, with the majority located in male-dominated organisations (42.5%).

Table 1: Gender dominance across WGEA reporting organisations, 2015

Gender dominance	Female employees (No.)	Male employees (No.)	Total employees (No.)	Total employees (%)
Female-dominated	895,416	318,375	1,213,791	30.7
Mixed	583,671	478,767	1,062,438	26.8
Male-dominated	452,951	1,230,079	1,683,030	42.5

Source: WGEA & BCEC (2016), *Gender Equity Insights 2016: Inside Australia's Gender pay Gap*, BCEC | WGEA Gender Equity Series, p 33. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC_WGEA_Gender_Pay_Equity_Insights_2016_Report.pdf

Remuneration in female and male-dominated organisations

The average base salary and total remuneration³ of all full-time employees is outlined in the Table 2.

An overall comparison of gender dominated organisations shows that:

- Female employees are paid less than male employees across all gender dominance classifications.
- Employees in female-dominated organisations have lower salaries on average, both for base salary and total remuneration, when compared to male-dominated organisations.

Table 2: Average full-time base salary and total remuneration by gender dominance, 2015

Gender dominance	Female		Male		Difference	
	Base salary (\$)	Total remuneration (\$)	Base salary (\$)	Total remuneration (\$)	Base salary (\$)	Total remuneration (\$)
Female-dominated	\$67,808	\$77,734	\$82,181	\$95,871	-\$14,373	-\$18,137
Mixed	\$73,445	\$86,509	\$88,094	\$107,494	-\$14,649	-\$20,985
Male-dominated	\$76,702	\$92,317	\$91,774	\$116,802	-\$15,072	-\$24,485

Source: WGEA & BCEC (2016), *Gender Equity Insights 2016: Inside Australia's Gender pay Gap*, BCEC | WGEA Gender Equity Series, p 35. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC_WGEA_Gender_Pay_Equity_Insights_2016_Report.pdf

³ Total remuneration includes base salary, superannuation, performance pay, bonuses and other discretionary pay.

Gender pay gaps in female- and male-dominated organisations

Gender pay gaps across female-dominated, male-dominated and mixed organisations vary, but consistently favour men. Table 3 shows:

- Gender pay gaps in favour of men exist in female-dominated, male-dominated and mixed organisations.
- Performance pay and other additional remuneration in male-dominated industries lead to higher gender pay gaps for total remuneration.
- Female managers working in male-dominated organisations are more likely to earn salaries closer to their male colleagues.

Table 3: Full-time gender pay gaps by gender dominance in organisations, 2015

Gender dominance	All employees		Managers		Non-managers	
	Base salary (%)	Total remuneration (%)	Base salary (%)	Total remuneration (%)	Base salary (%)	Total remuneration (%)
Female-dominated	17.5	18.9	22.4	24.5	12.4	13.2
Mixed	16.6	19.5	17.1	20.9	10.6	12.4
Male-dominated	16.4	21.0	14.3	17.3	14.8	19.7

Source: WGEA & BCEC (2016), *Gender Equity Insights 2016: Inside Australia's Gender pay Gap*, BCEC | WGEA Gender Equity Series, p 35. Available at: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/BCEC_WGEA_Gender_Pay_Equity_Insights_2016_Report.pdf

Note: Base salary and Total remuneration exclude CEOs/Heads of Business in Australia. Total remuneration includes base salary, superannuation, performance pay, bonuses and other discretionary pay.



Gender segregation by industry




















Table 4 shows the persistence of industrial gender-segregation over the last two decades. Each of the 19 industries is classified as either female-dominated, male-dominated or mixed.⁴

Between 1995 and 2015:

- The Health Care and Social Assistance and Education and Training industries are increasingly dominated by women.
- Roughly half of the male-dominated industries, including Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services and Transport, Postal and Warehousing, have seen improvement in female representation.
- Declines in female representation are recorded in two male-dominated industries: Construction and Wholesale Trade.
- Amongst the mixed industries, Public Administration and Safety, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services, and Information Media and Telecommunications in particular have become more evenly gendered over the past 20 years.

⁴ **Female-dominated:** 60% women or more. Industries: Health Care and Social Assistance, Education and Training. **Mixed:** Between 41%-59% women. Industries: Accommodation and Food Services, Administrative and Support Services, Arts and Recreation Services, Financial and Insurance Services, Other Services, Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services, Retail Trade. **Male-dominated:** 40% women or less. Industries: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, Construction, Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services, Information Media and Telecommunications, Manufacturing, Mining, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Public Administration and Safety, Transport, Postal and Warehousing and Wholesale Trade.

Table 4: Proportion of female employees by industry, 1995 and 2015

Industry	Female employees, 1995 (%)	Female employees, 2015 (%)	Female employees, difference (.pp)	Gender dominance (2015)
 Health Care and Social Assistance	76.4	79.2	2.8	Female-dominated
 Education and Training	65.4	70.6	5.2	Female-dominated
 Retail Trade	54.1	54.5	0.3	Mixed
 Accommodation and Food Services	54.7	53.9	-0.7	Mixed
 Financial and Insurance Services	58.1	51.1	-7.1	Mixed
 Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	45.7	50.1	4.4	Mixed
 Administrative and Support Services	54.1	49.2	-4.8	Mixed
 Public Administration and Safety	39.8	49.1	9.3	Mixed
 Arts and Recreation Services	48.8	46.1	-2.7	Mixed
 Information Media and Telecommunications	39.7	44.5	4.8	Mixed
 Other Services	39.5	41.4	2.0	Mixed
 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	43.5	40.4	-3.1	Mixed
 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	31.9	33.7	1.7	Male-dominated
 Wholesale Trade	32.0	31.1	-0.9	Male-dominated
 Manufacturing	26.3	27.9	1.6	Male-dominated
 Transport, Postal and Warehousing	20.6	23.4	2.8	Male-dominated
 Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	15.5	20.8	5.3	Male-dominated
 Mining	12.0	12.9	0.9	Male-dominated
 Construction	14.8	12.0	-2.8	Male-dominated

Source: ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 27 July 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>

Note: Data is based on May as the reference period.

Gender segregation and leadership by industry

Table 5 shows the proportion of Chief executive officer ('CEO')⁵ and Key management personnel ('KMP')⁶ positions held by women. A comparison of gender dominance reveals:

- Men hold the majority of leadership roles, even in female-dominated industries.
- However, women are substantially more likely to hold CEO or KMP roles in mixed industries and especially female-dominated industries.

Table 5: Proportion of female CEOs and KMPs, 2015

Gender dominance	Female CEOs (%)	Female KMPs (%)
Female-dominated	34.6	46.6
Mixed	12.9	27.2
Male-dominated	6.0	18.7
All	15.4	27.4

Source: WGEA (2016), Agency reporting data, 2014-15 reporting period.



Gender segregation by occupation

Table 6 highlights the persistence of labour market gender-segregation by occupation between 1995 and 2015.⁷

- Occupational gender-segregation has remained fairly consistent, with the greatest improvement in the Professionals occupation category.
- The most notable movements have been in male-dominated occupational categories where there has been a decrease in female Machinery Operators and Drivers and an increase in female Managers.
- WGEA reporting data also shows that the representation of women steadily declines with seniority so that most senior levels of management are heavily male-dominated.⁸

⁵ The Chief executive officer ('CEO') or equivalent is the head of business in Australia. For corporate structures with one or more relevant subsidiaries, the definition of CEO includes the head of business for each relevant subsidiary in Australia.

⁶ Key management personnel ('KMP') refers to those persons who have authority and responsibility for planning, directing and controlling the activities of the entity, directly or indirectly, including any director (whether executive or otherwise) of that entity.

⁷ ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 13 May 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>

⁸ WGEA (2015), Australia's gender equality scorecard. Available: https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/2014-15-WGEA_SCORECARD.pdf

Table 6: Proportion of female employees by occupation, 1995 and 2015

Occupation	Female employees, 1995 (%)	Female employees, 2015 (%)	Female employees, Difference (.pp)	Gender dominance (2015)
Clerical and Administrative Workers	76.0	74.3	-1.7	Female-dominated
Community and Personal Service Workers	66.2	68.2	2.0	Female-dominated
Sales Workers	59.0	59.1	0.1	Mixed
Professionals	47.1	54.6	7.5	Mixed
Managers	30.1	37.1	7.0	Male-dominated
Labourers	36.9	33.6	-3.3	Male-dominated
Technicians and Trades Workers	12.4	14.7	2.3	Male-dominated
Machinery Operators and Drivers	14.1	9.2	-4.9	Male-dominated
Total employees	43.1	46.0	2.9	Mixed

Source: ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 27 July 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>

Note: Data is based on May as the reference period. Occupations are ranked from largest proportion of female employees to smallest.

Full-time or part-time status by occupation

Some occupational characteristics may have an impact on the level of segregation. For instance, the availability of part-time work increases female participation in occupations.

Male-dominated occupations tend to have a lower percentage of part-time employees when compared to female-dominated and mixed occupations.

This may suggest that women avoid occupations where part-time work is less likely to be available, or that part-time work is more likely to be supported by employers in female-dominated occupations.

Table 7 below outlines the percentage of employees in each occupational category by full-time/part-time status. The high percentage of part-time employees in the male-dominated category of Labourers can be explained by the nature of this work as seasonal or project-related.

Table 7: Occupational workforce by full-time/part-time status, 2015

Occupation	Full-time (%)	Part-time (%)	Gender dominance
Sales Workers	42.4	57.6	Mixed
Community and Personal Service Workers	44.4	55.6	Female-dominated
Labourers	52.5	47.5	Male-dominated
Clerical and Administrative Workers	64.5	35.5	Female-dominated
Professionals	75.8	24.2	Mixed
Machinery Operators and Drivers	81.8	18.2	Male-dominated
Technicians and Trades Workers	86.4	13.6	Male-dominated
Managers	86.8	13.2	Male-dominated
Total	68.1	31.9	Mixed

Source: ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 27 July 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>

Note: Data is based on May as the reference period. Occupations are ranked from largest proportion of part-time employees to smallest.

Full-time average weekly hours by occupation

Table 8 below shows the average weekly hours for women and men employed full-time by occupation. The maximum weekly ordinary hours for a full-time employee are currently set at 38 hours a week.⁹

Results show that:

- Both women and men exceeded this weekly amount, working an overall average of 41.3 hours per week.
- The average for women working full-time is 38.8 hours, with men working 3.9 hours more in an average 42.7 hour week.
- Female and male managers work the most hours per week out of all occupations (42.1 and 47.6 hours, respectively).
- The weekly working hours are highest in male-dominated occupations when compared to mixed and female-dominated occupations.

⁹ National Employment Standard/Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard (the Standard). <http://www.fairwork.gov.au/employment/hours-of-work/pages/default.aspx>

Table 8: Full-time average weekly hours worked by gender and occupation, 2015

Occupation	Female (ave. hours per week)	Male (ave. hours per week)	Total (ave. hours per week)	Gender dominance
Managers	42.1	47.6	45.8	Male-dominated
Machinery Operators And Drivers	39.4	42.1	41.9	Male-dominated
Technicians and Trades Workers	39.3	41.6	41.4	Male-dominated
Sales Workers	38.5	42.9	41.0	Mixed
Professionals	39.0	42.4	40.8	Mixed
Labourers	37.4	40.3	39.7	Male-dominated
Community and Personal Service Workers	37.3	40.8	38.8	Female-dominated
Clerical and Administrative Workers	37.3	40.3	38.3	Female-dominated
Total	38.8	42.7	41.3	Mixed

Source: ABS (2016), *Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly, May 2016*, cat. no. 6291.0.55.003, viewed 27 July 2016, <http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6291.0.55.003>

Note: Data is based on May as the reference period. Occupations are ranked from largest number of total average weekly hours worked to smallest.