

Australian
Gender
Equality
Council

STATE OF THE NATION

Gender Equality 2025:
Data and Insights
20th November 2025
Associate Professor Terry Fitzsimmons

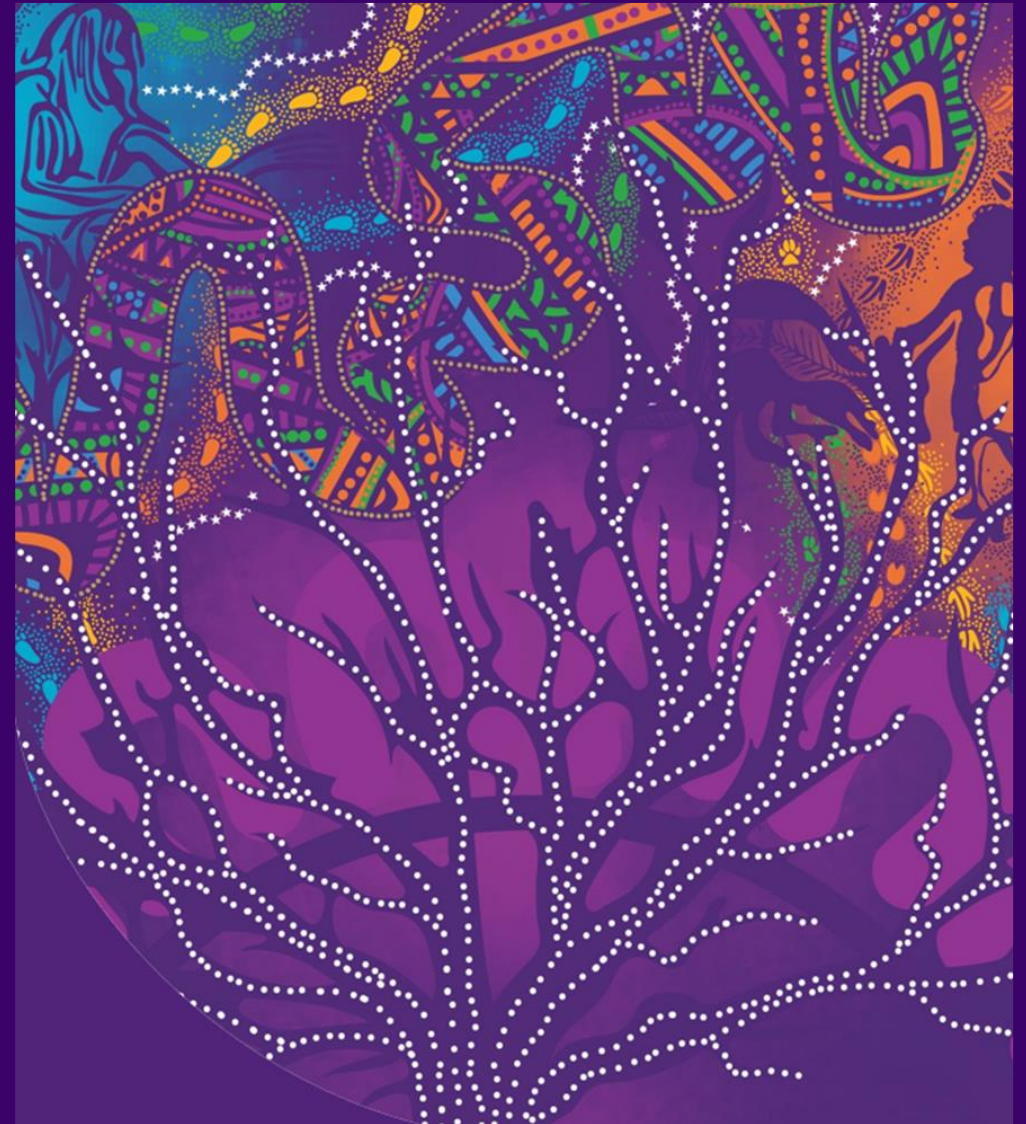


Acknowledgement of Country

I would like to acknowledge and pay tribute to the Traditional Owners of the land on which I am presenting to you today; those of the Ugarapul people, who are situated on the Upper Brisbane River or the Maiwar, as it is known to First Nations people.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders have been custodians of this land for over 60,000 years and never ceded sovereignty over these lands.

I want to recognise their valuable contributions to Australian and global society and to pay my respects to their elders and their leaders, past and present.



A Guidance Through Time: Created by Quandamooka artists Casey Coolwell and Kyra Mancktelow for The University of Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan

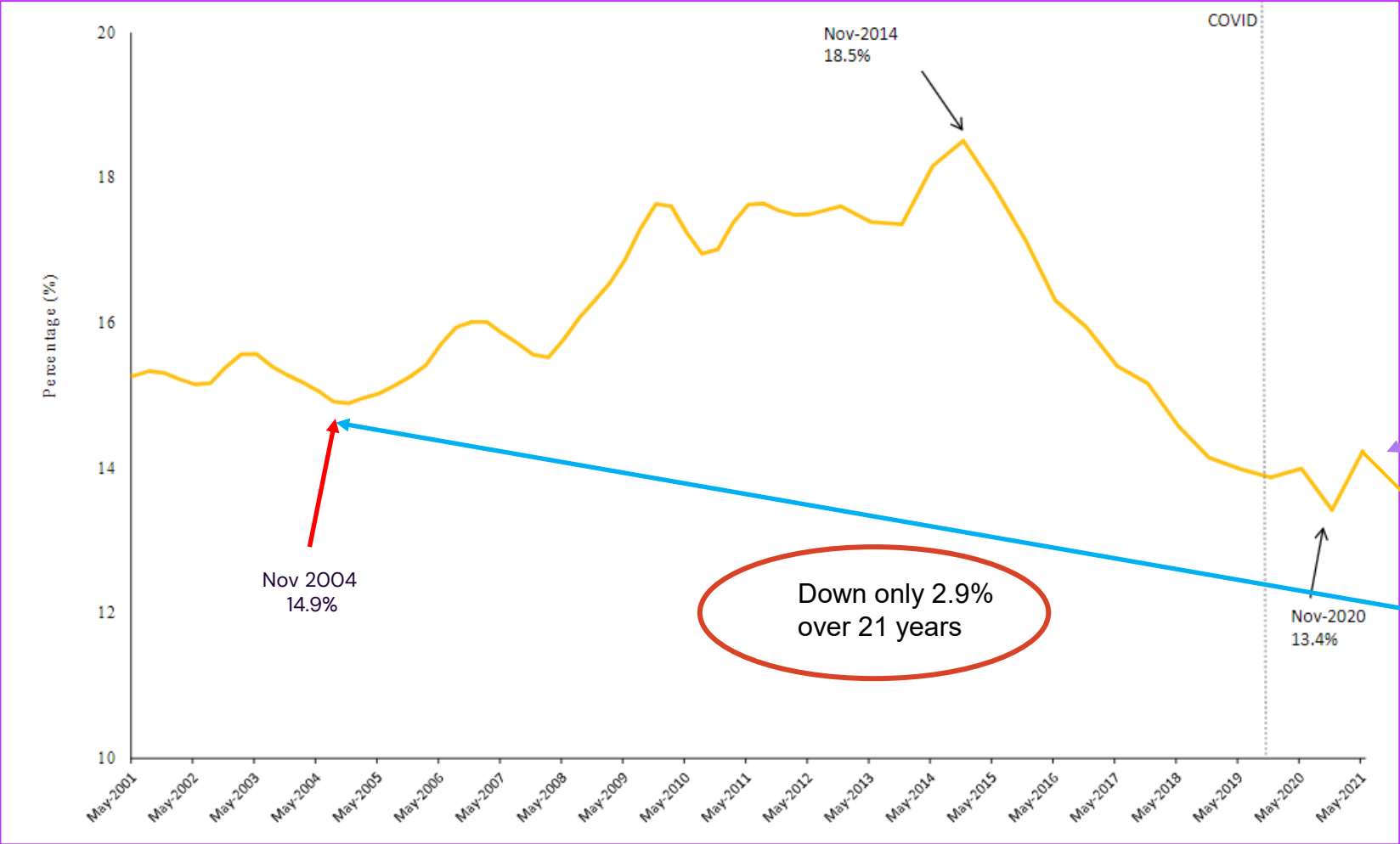


USING THE GENDER PAY GAP AS A GENDER (IN)EQUALITY LENS

GENDER PAY GAP (ABS DATA: BASE SALARY) - TREND PREDICTIONS

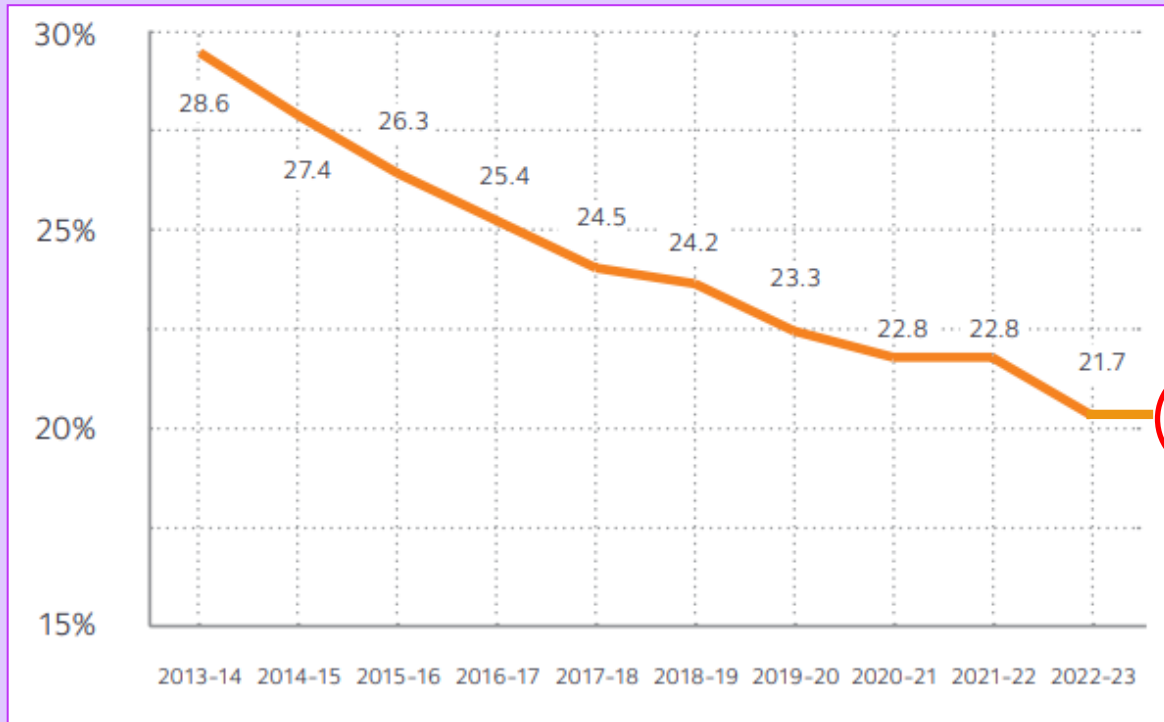


ABS Pay Gap figure only accounts for differences in base salary.



On Current Trend, based upon economic cycles, it will be the year **2108** before we eliminate the base salary gender pay gap.

FULL REMUNERATION PAY GAP - CAN IT KEEP DECLINING?



WGEA (2024) Gender Equality Scorecard <https://www.wgea.gov.au/publications/australias-gender-equality-scorecard>

Gender Pay Gap: Average weekly **Total Remuneration** pay gap in Australia is 21.8%. The percentage difference is explained* by:-

1. Industry Segregation (30-40%)
2. Level within Hierarchy (15 -25%)
3. Position within Band (10 -15%)
4. Like for Like (economy wide) (30- 35%)
5. Like for Like (Within Firm) (3 - 5%)

* These numbers are compiled from a broad range of studies. There is still no definitive study on how these proportions trend or can be predicted over time.

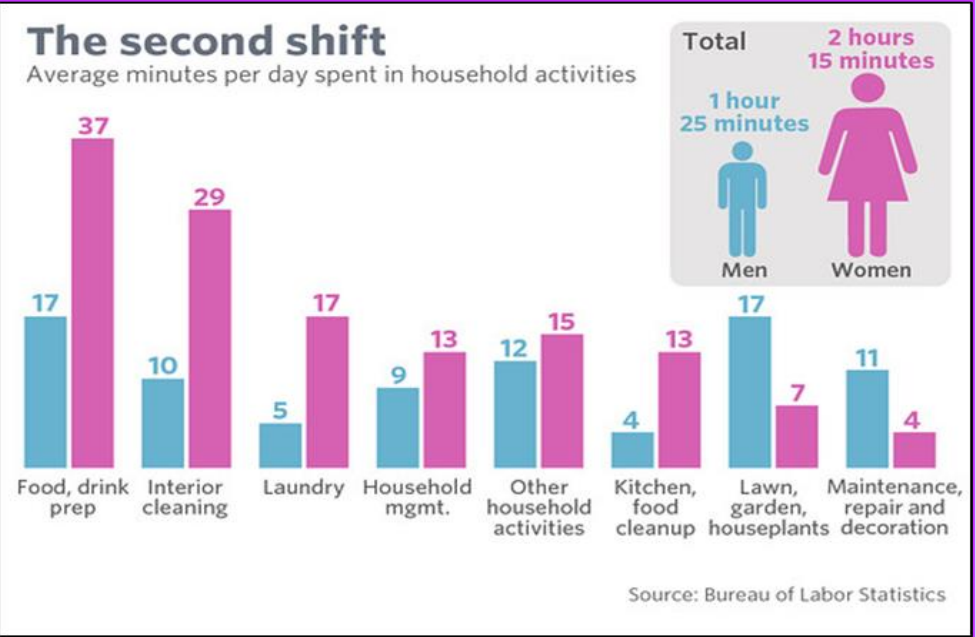
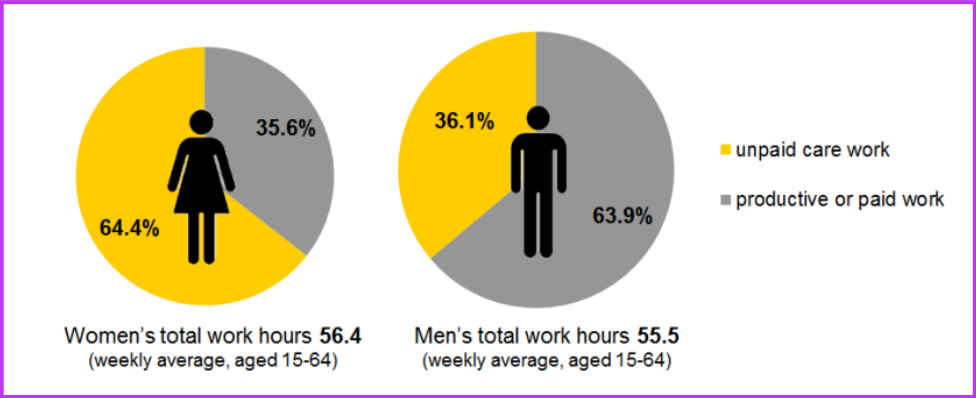
The publication by WGEA of Gender Pay Gap Data from the 27th February 2024 will bring additional pressure for companies to address some, but not all, of these areas.

The Public Sector will be reporting by 2027.



DIVISION OF DOMESTIC LABOUR

DIVISION OF DOMESTIC LABOUR - THE CRITICAL BARRIER



The division of domestic labour, even where both partners work full time, has been stubbornly persistent over the past 50 years.

Women are still 71.8% of the primary carers of children in Australia and 83% of one parent families are single mothers.

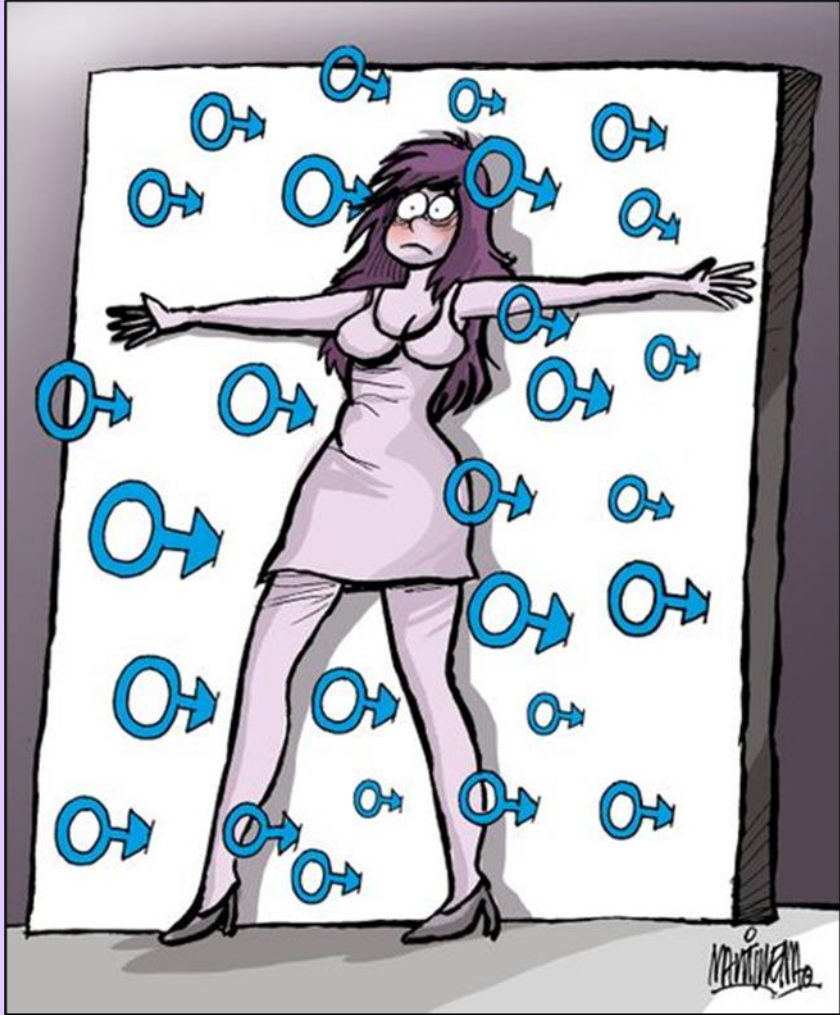
Women represent 90%+ of the carers of the elderly or people with disabilities.

Time spent on domestic duties is time lost to career progression potential relative to men.

It is the primary cause of gender differences in positions within salary bands.

* Australian Government. (2024). Status of Women Report Card. Canberra: Australian Government

INEQUITY BUILT INTO INDUSTRY MERIT STRUCTURES



The division of domestic labour has advantaged men in continuing to work in traditional patterns.

Traditional patterns are also built into industry structures, especially 'merit' structures designed to govern progress within an industry/field.

The relative lack of women Professors, Barristers, Engineers, Surgeons and Scientists are all examples of fields where male patterns of work are embedded in progression metrics and contribute to lower numbers of women in senior ranks.

The Division of Domestic Labour is implicated as a key underlying cause of all elements of the gender pay gap, alongside gender role stereotypes.

A CASE IN POINT - MERIT AND STRUCTURAL INEQUALITY

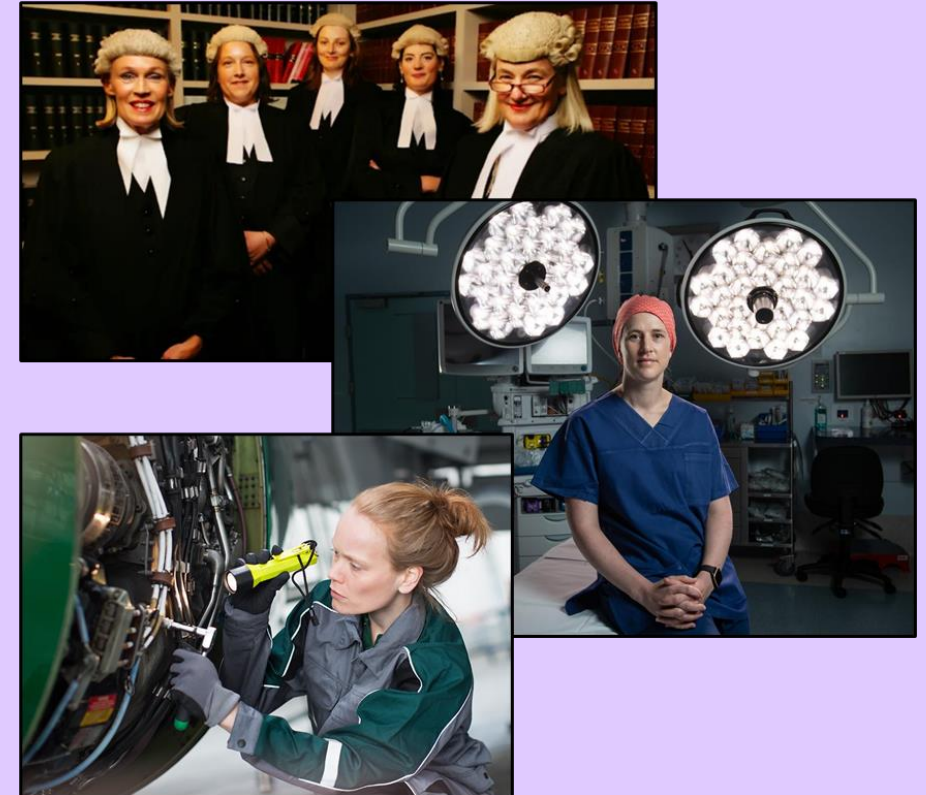


Despite women comprising 50% of Australia's accounting and finance professionals, only 9.2% of registered liquidators are women. Based upon current trends, it will be another 106 years before we see gender parity in Registered Liquidators.

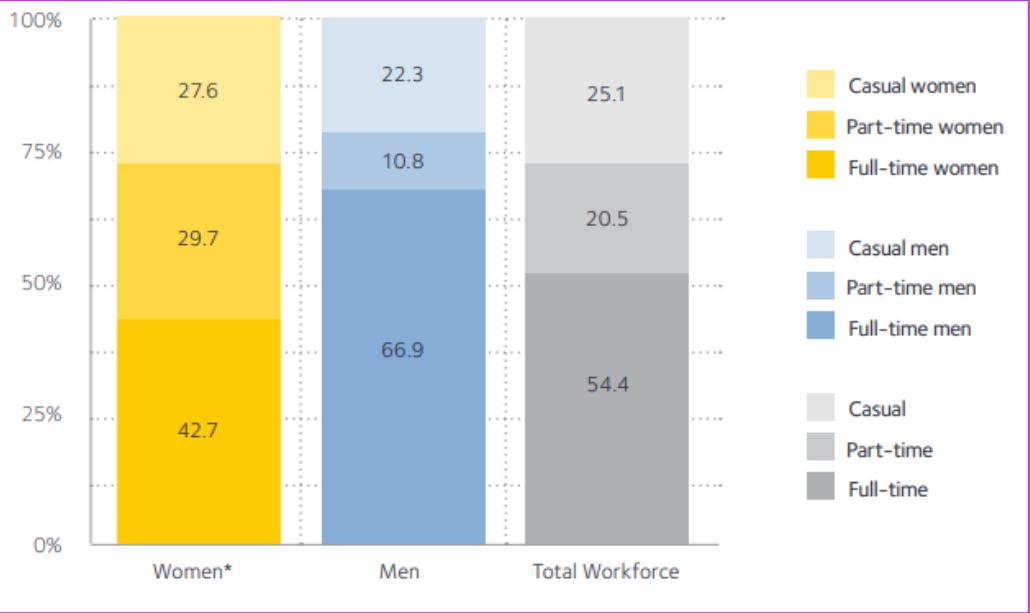
A significant barrier to registration is the current requirement to have 4,000 hours of work on 'Court Appointed' liquidations over a 5-year period.

This requirement does not account for the division of domestic labour and childcare as there are no pro-rata considerations for parental leave or casual/part-time work.

Such outdated practices are brought into sharp focus by UK registration provisions which require 600hrs over 3 years, with an exam to validate the candidate's eligibility.

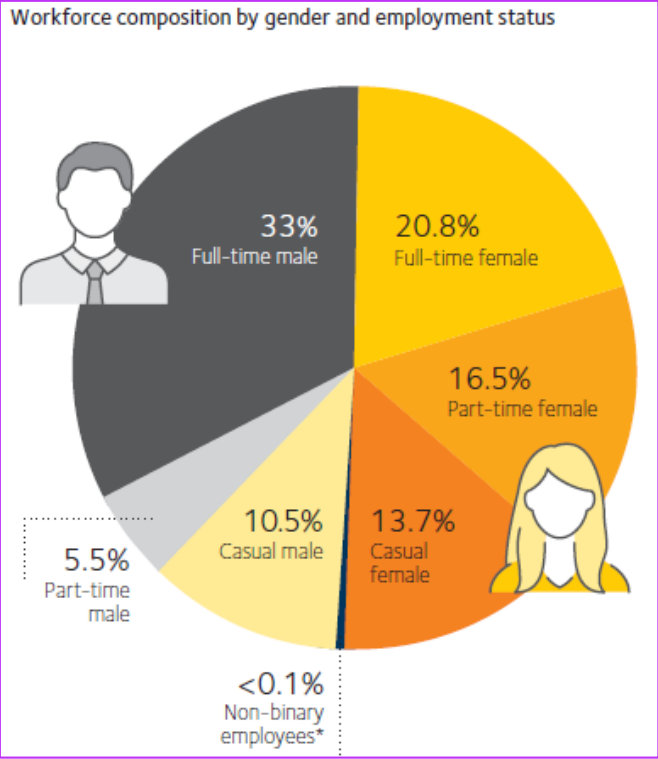


CAUSAL OF EMPLOYMENT TYPE BY GENDER



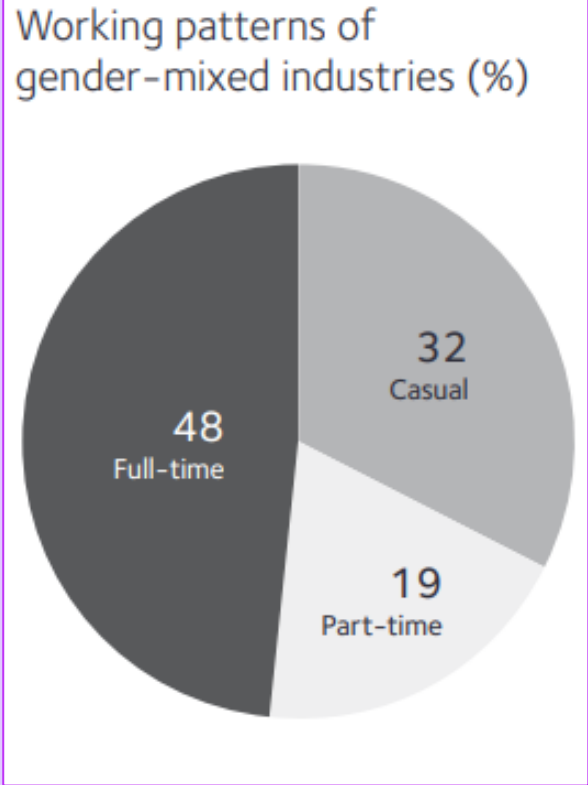
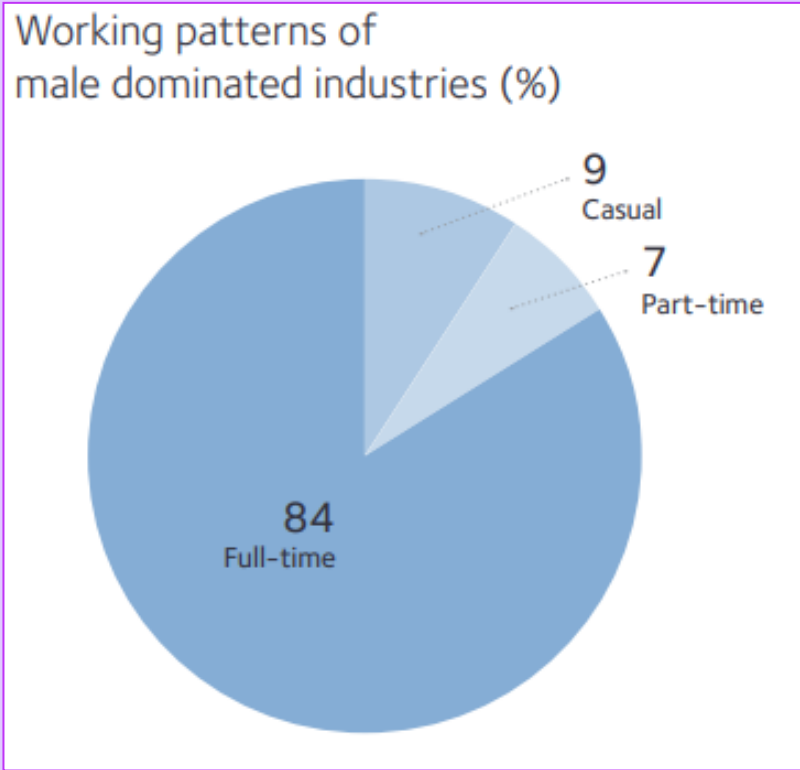
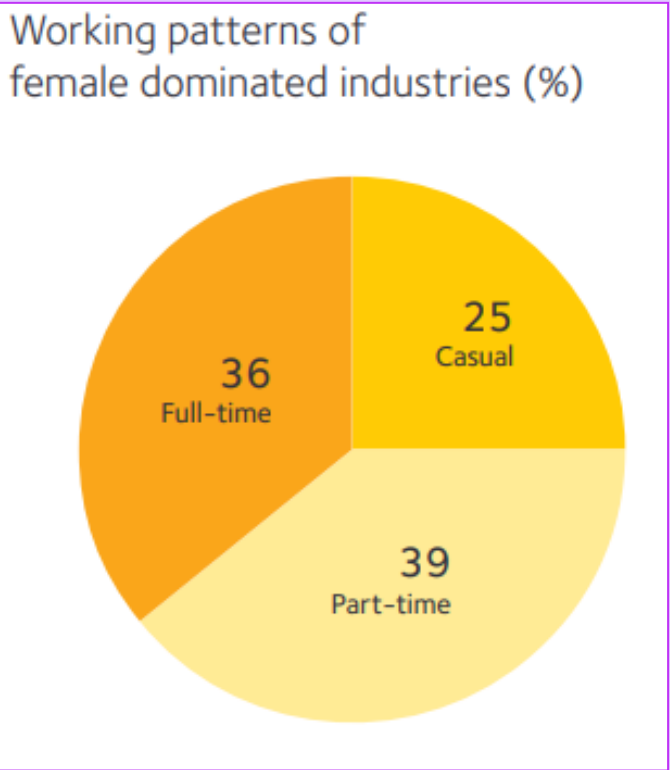
Women currently represent 51% of the Australian workforce.

However, women are concentrated in more vulnerable casual and part-time roles.



Proportion of women and men employees by employment type. (WGEA, 2024)

BARRIERS TO WOMEN IN MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRIES





INDUSTRY SEGREGATION

INDUSTRY GENDER SEGREGATION



Industry	Women (%)	Women managers (%)	Women KMPs (%)	Women CEOs (%)
Mining	22	23	23	8
Construction	26	19	20	6
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	26	25	28	4
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	26	27	27	8
Manufacturing	28	26	27	9
Public Administration and Safety	30	27	28	14
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	35	22	29	2
Wholesale Trade	36	30	27	10
Information Media and Telecommunications	40	36	36	18
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	43	38	31	9
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	44	38	31	16
Administrative and Support Services	48	46	40	23
Arts and Recreation Services	52	45	38	23
Financial and Insurance Services	52	42	33	13
Accommodation and Food Services	52	45	37	13
Other Services	55	52	47	29
Retail Trade	56	49	35	14
Education and Training	65	55	49	37
Health Care and Social Assistance	78	71	59	50

Across the workforce, women and men are concentrated in different industries. Of Australia's 19 industry groups, just 9 have at least 40% women and men.

Women are concentrated in lower paid Health Care and Social Assistance and Education and Training sectors and least represented in higher paid Construction, Trades, Energy and Mining sectors.

Proportion of women employees and representation in management by industry. (WGEA, 2024)



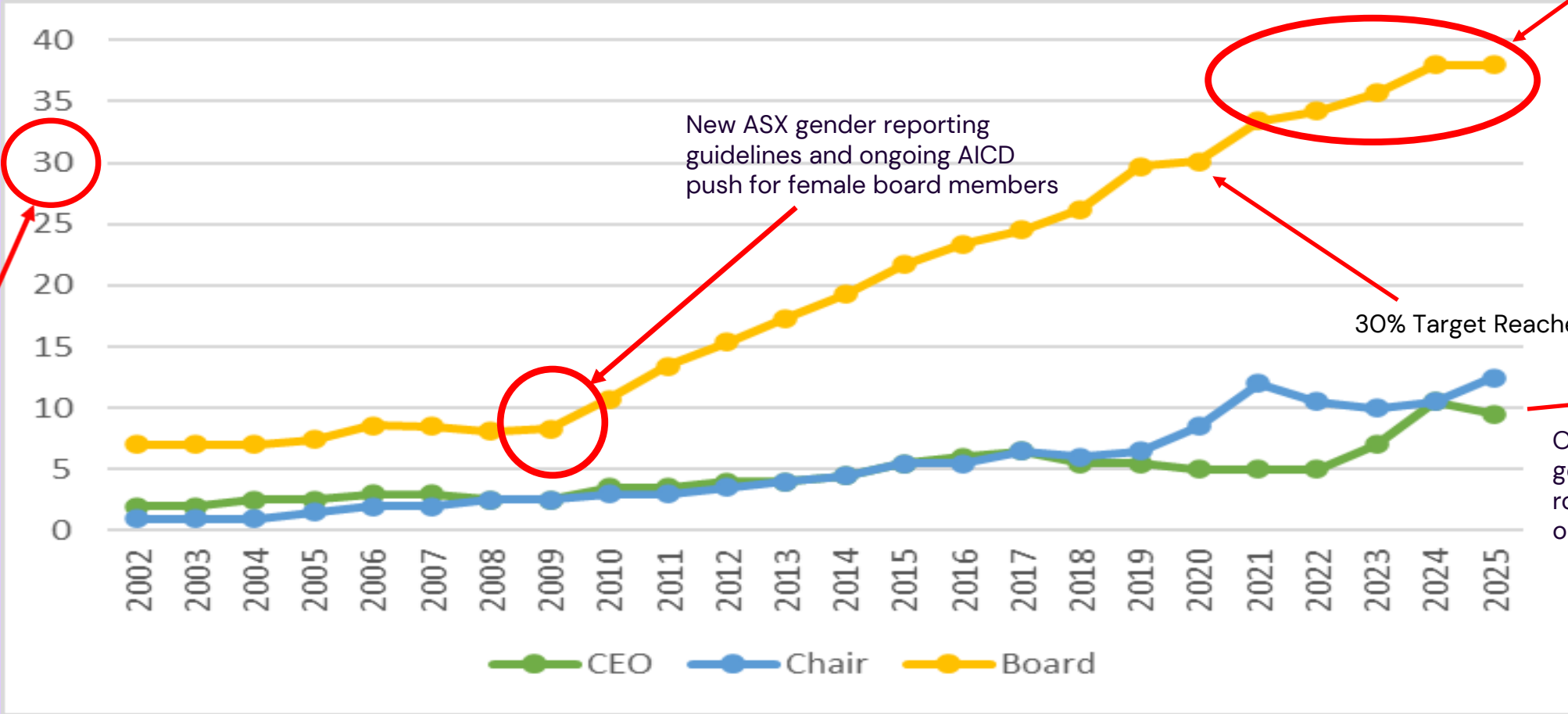
LEVEL WITHIN THE HIERARCHY

LEVEL WITHIN THE HIERARCHY ASX200 - CEO PARITY IN THE YEAR 2153AD



40/40/20 by 2026 in ASX100?

It is worth noting that women are above 50% on Federal and Qld State Boards and above 40% as chairs.



AICD and 30% Club Target in 2015. New target set at 40/40/20 in 2019.

New ASX gender reporting guidelines and ongoing AICD push for female board members

30% Target Reached

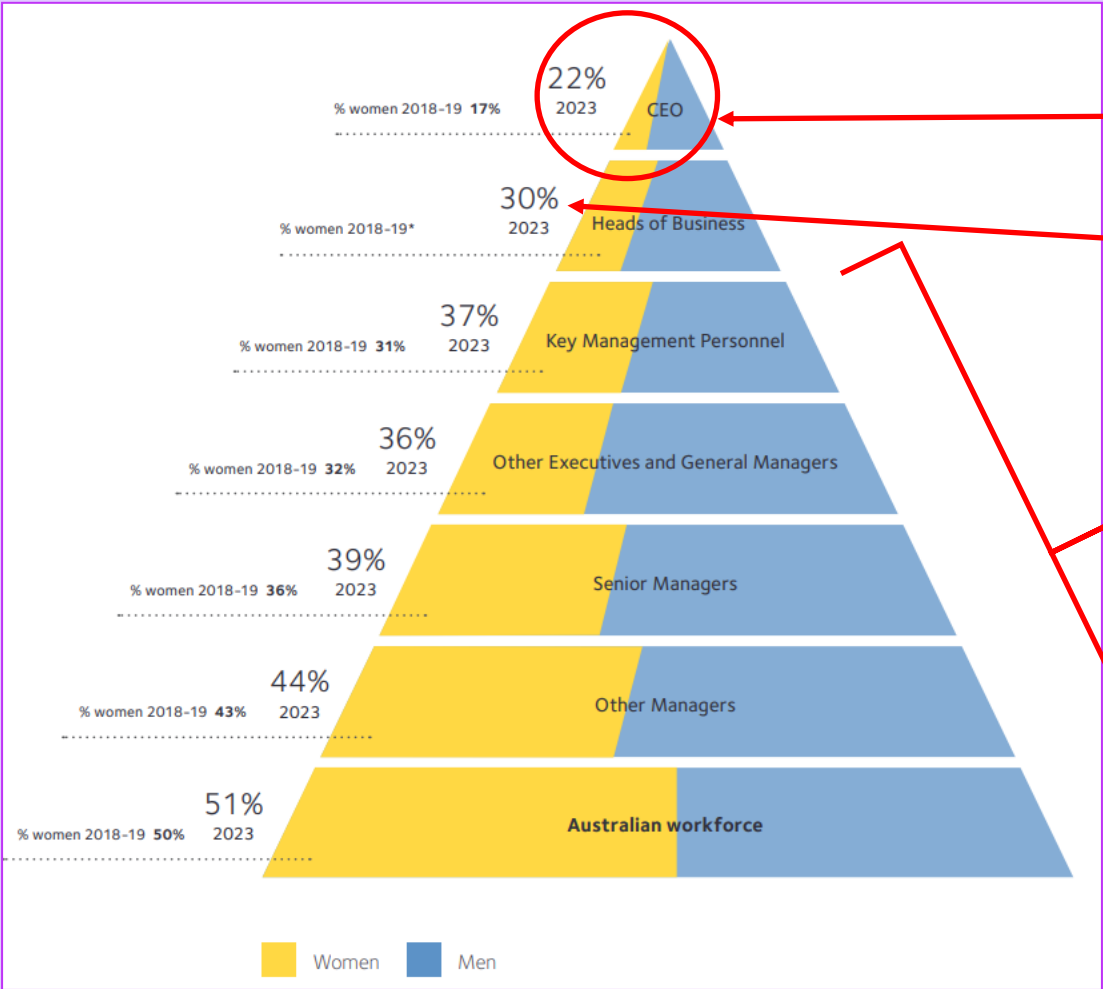
On current trend gender parity in CEO roles for ASX200 will occur in 2153.

Projected from 'Census of Women in Leadership' EOWA 2002 – 2012, ASX Company Database 2013–2025 (Feb 28, 2024), AICD (August 2024)

LEVEL WITHIN THE HIERARCHY - WHOLE ECONOMY



There is a continuing blockage for women wanting to enter CEO roles



+5% over 8 years (another 45 years until parity)
Misleading, as not all CEO pipeline roles

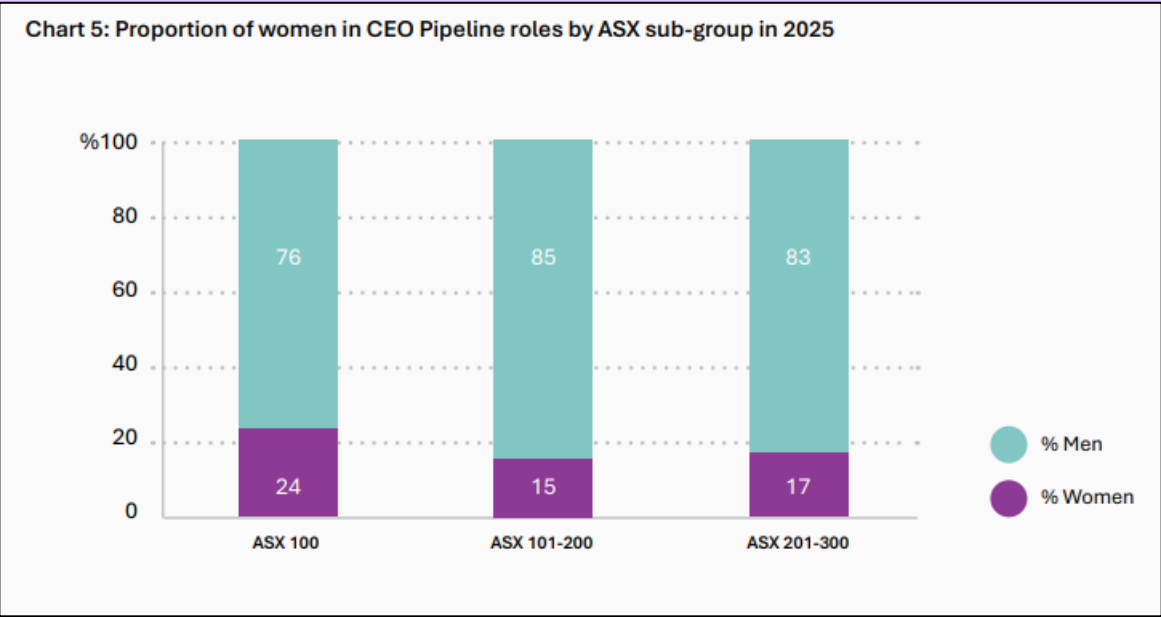
Average of 6.6% total increase over 8 years (parity in 20 years?)
Unlikely, unless workforce and, particularly, full-time participation rates increase.
71.1% for men and 63.5% for women. (ABS, 2025)

GENDERED PROGRESSION PATHWAYS TO CEO



Executive Leadership Team (ELT) – Line roles drive key commercial outcomes and usually come with profit and loss responsibility and include the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer and Group Executives.

Over 98% of new CEO appointments come from these and Chief Financial Officer roles. However, the pool of women in these roles is relatively low.



CEW Senior Executive Census (2025)

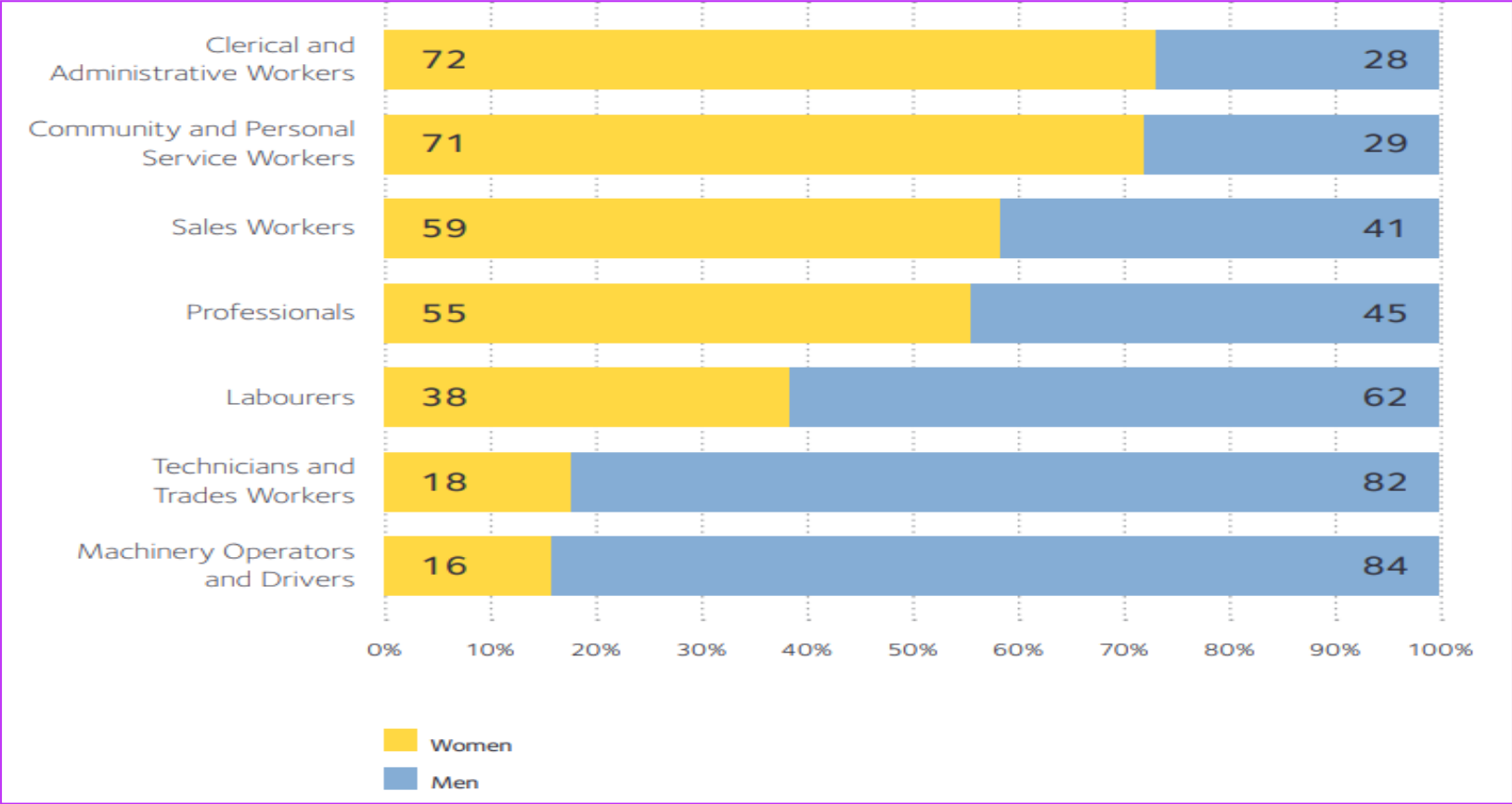


LIKE-FOR-LIKE ECONOMY WIDE

OCCUPATIONAL GENDER SEGREGATION



At a national level, women are concentrated in occupations that are generally lower paid, reflecting the undervaluation of women's contributions to the workforce. There has been little change in occupational segregation over the last five years. Since 2018-19, the greatest changes in the proportion of women and men in non-manager occupations have been in the male-dominated occupations of Labourers, Technicians and Trades Workers, and Machinery Operators and Drivers (increasing the proportion of women by 5pp, 4pp and 3pp respectively). There are not similar shifts of men to into roles that are historically undertaken by women.



Indoor Roles

Outdoor Roles

Proportion of women employees and representation by occupation across industry. (WGEA, 2023)

ADDRESSING LIKE-FOR-LIKE



‘Game-changing’ rulings grant big gender gap catch-up pay rises



David Marin-Guzman
Workplace correspondent

Updated Apr 16, 2025 – 5:25pm,
first published at 1:05pm



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7 min

The government’s workplace tribunal has recommended pay rises of up to 30 per cent to hundreds of thousands of early childhood workers and health professionals in landmark decisions that try to fix gender imbalances in key industries dominated by women.

Business groups said the rulings would cause a dramatic wages spike in the affected industries where many operators were already struggling with costs, and the tribunal itself warned parents would face higher childcare fees unless the federal government committed more money to pay for the recommended increases.



Childcare workers have been campaigning for better pay for years. Luis Enrique Ascut

RELATED QUOTES

RHC \$31.310 ▼ -0.48% ▼

Changes introduced into the Fair Work Act in 2022 allowed wage cases to reference ‘like-for-like’ roles and pay *across*, rather than *within* industries.

The Fair Work Commission undertook a review of five “priority” awards:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers and Practitioners and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Services Award 2020
- Children’s Services Award 2010
- Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020
- Pharmacy Industry Award 2020
- Social, Community, Home Care and Disability Services Industry Award 2010.

The review identified systemic pay inequity, opening the path to significant like-for-like pay increases, through the award system.

April 2025 – Up to 30% pay increase for childcare workers

OVERALL ECONOMIC OUTCOMES - GENDER DISPARITY IN RETIREMENT



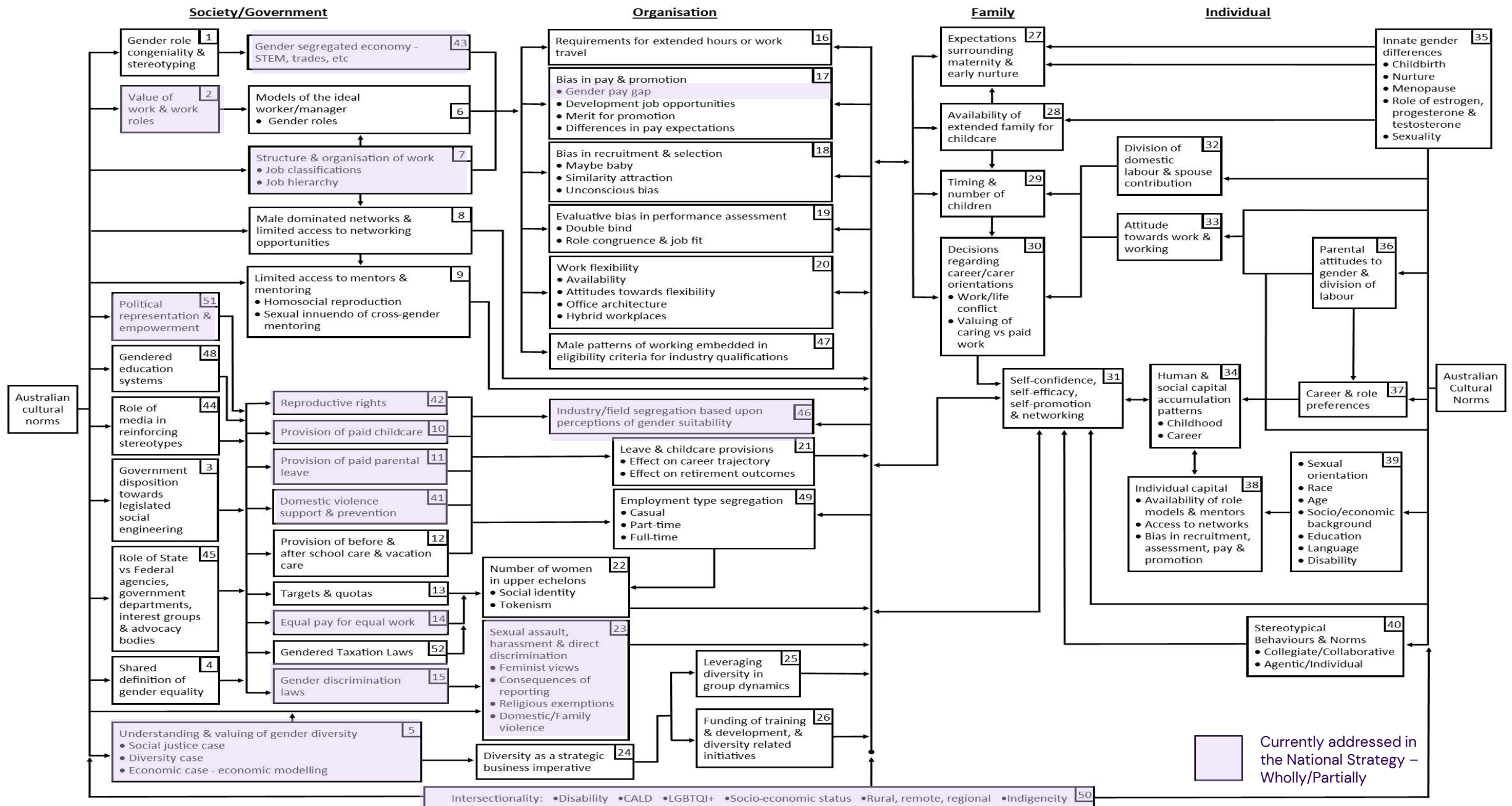
Median Super Balances by Age		
Age	Men	Women
18-24	\$5,394	\$4,963
25-29	\$19,220	\$19,162
30-34	\$41,268	\$36,016
35-39	\$74,130	\$57,566
40-44	\$108,344	\$79,445
45-49	\$144,272	\$101,888
50-54	\$177,194	\$122,150
55-59	\$202,583	\$140,662
60-64	\$219,773	\$163,218
65-69	\$217,954	\$199,006
70-74	\$214,749	\$215,202
75+	\$185,228	\$179,928

The Association of Superannuation Funds of Australia (ASFA) – July 2025

Required for Comfortable Retirement

35	\$111,500
36	\$122,500
37	\$133,000
38	\$144,000
39	\$156,000
40	\$168,000
41	\$179,000
42	\$190,000
43	\$201,000
44	\$213,000
45	\$226,000
46	\$239,000
47	\$252,000
48	\$266,000
49	\$281,000
50	\$296,000

<https://reviewmysuper.com.au/superannuation-news/average-super-balances-by-age/>





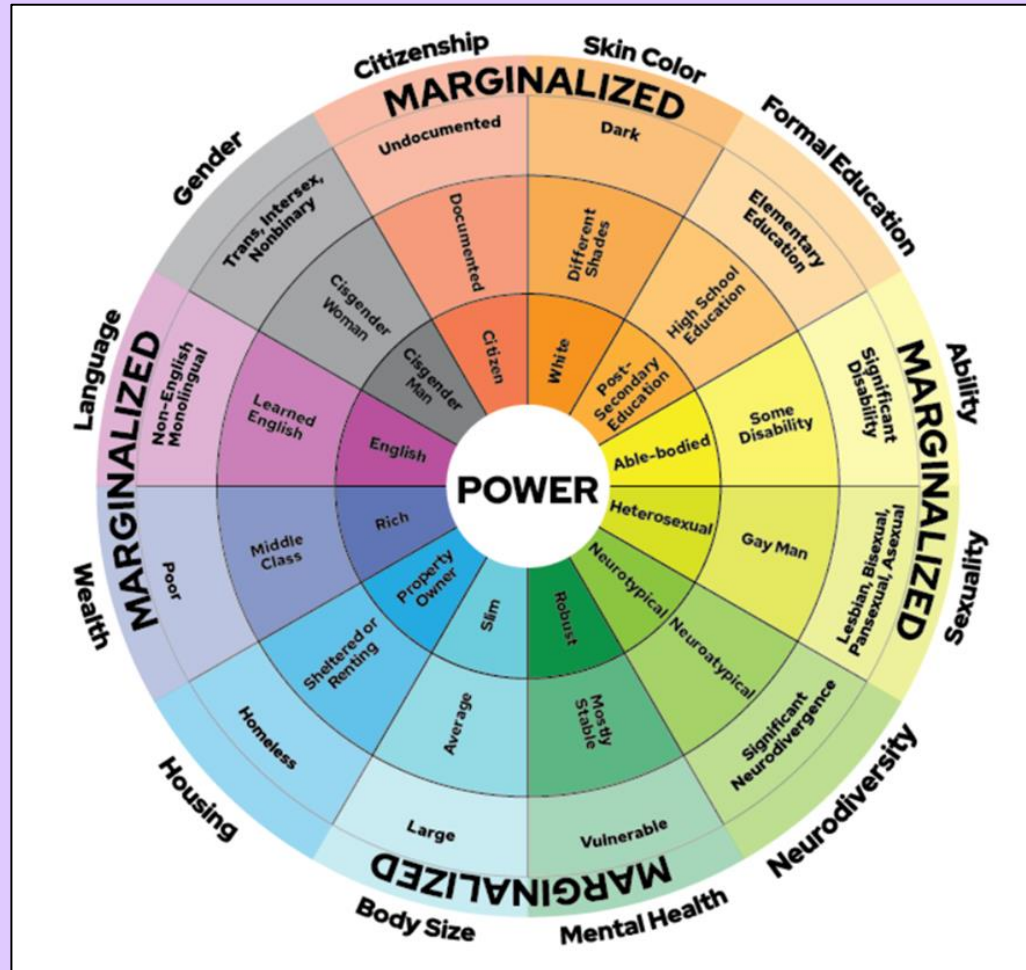
THE QUESTION OF MERIT



ASX 50 CEOs November 2025

The ASX 50 Control 40% of Australia's GDP.

PRIVILEGED OR DOMINANT CULTURE - GENDER & INTERSECTIONALITY



Wheel of Power/Privilege. Vanderwoerd. (2016)

The 'Wheel of Privilege' (Duckworth, 2016) and the 'Web of Oppression' (Vanderwoerd, 2016) are attempts to map the 'other'. The ASX50 has the highest gender balance, it goes down from there.

In the case of ASX200 CEOs, the 'other' is anyone other than white, heterosexual, able bodied, married, men over 45 years old and over 5' 8".

Doing the math: $49\% \text{ (Men)} \times 50\% \text{ (over 5'8")} \times 54\% \text{ (Anglo)} \times 40\% \text{ (over 45yrs)} \times 95.5\% \text{ (Straight)} \times 78.6\% \text{ (without disability)} \times 50.3\% \text{ (married)} = 2\% \text{ of the Population}$ vs 84% ASX200 CEOs. The ASX 50 Control 40% of Australia's GDP.

Each of these 'others' is, to some degree, more or less disadvantaged in reaching CEO roles. Arguably, by drawing on such a small pool of talent, we reduce optimal organisational outcomes and that of the nation overall.

NEED FOR DEI - THE INTERSECTIONALITY PAY GAP (* ADDED TO AVERAGE GAP)



- Physical Disability (8–18%*) Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK) – 2017 (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>)**
- Mental Disability (19%*) Equality and Human Rights Commission (UK) – 2017 (<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com>)**
- Men in the LGBTQ+ community (4%) Human Rights Campaign Foundation (US) – 2018 (<https://www.hrc.org/resources>)**
- Women in the LGBTQ+ community (13%*) Human Rights Campaign Foundation (US) – 2018 (<https://www.hrc.org/resources>)**
- Non-binary, genderqueer, genderfluid (30%) Human Rights Campaign Foundation (US) – 2018 (<https://www.hrc.org/resources>)**
- Trans Men (30%) Human Rights Campaign Foundation (US) – 2018 (<https://www.hrc.org/resources>)**
- Trans Women (40%) Human Rights Campaign Foundation (US) – 2018 (<https://www.hrc.org/resources>)**
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – Major Cities (30–51%) Australian Institute of Health & Welfare (2022) (<https://www.aihw.gov.au>)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders – Regional to Remote (52–85%) AIHW (2022) (<https://www.aihw.gov.au>)
- CALD – From Non-native English-speaking countries (16–24%*) ABS (2019) <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/characteristics-recent-migrants/latest-release>

** Data is very difficult to obtain for Australia and includes a wide range of circumstances

PUSHBACK AND THE ENTRENCHING OF 'MERIT'



Unthinkable?

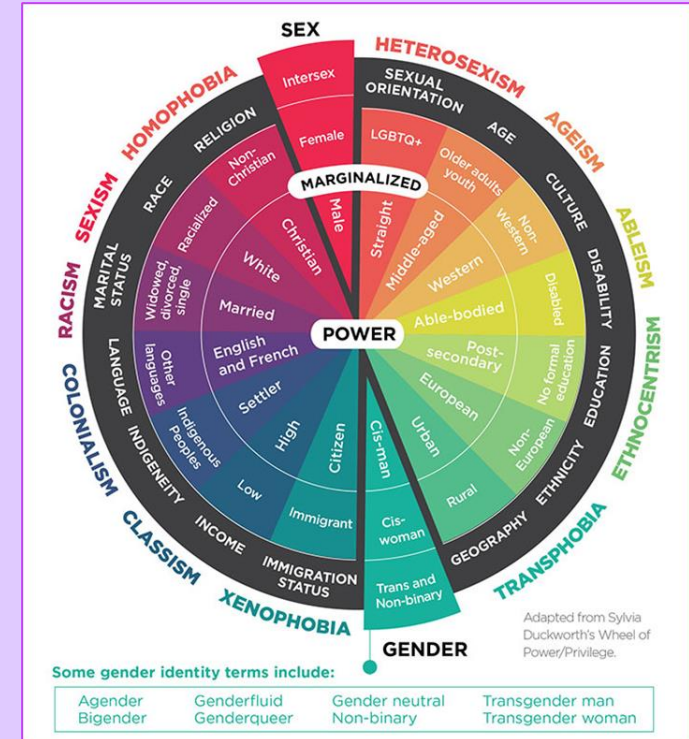
Words and phrases that are banned or scrubbed from US government websites and documents and/or flagged for review by Federal agencies in Compliance with Trump's Executive Orders of 20th January 2025.

abortion accessible accessibility activism activists advocacy advocate advocates affirmative action affirmative action programs affirming care affordable home affordable housing agricultural water agrivoltaics air pollution all-inclusive allyship alternative energy anti-racism antiracist asexual assigned at birth assigned female at birth assigned male at birth at risk autism aviation fuel barrier barriers belong bias biased Biased toward bioenergy biofuel biogas biomethane biases Biases towards biologically female biologically male bipoc bisexual Black black and latinx breastfeed + people breastfeed + person Cancer Moonshot carbon emissions mitigation carbon footprint carbon markets carbon pricing	carbon sequestration CEC changing climate chestfeed + people chestfeed + person clean energy clean fuel clean power clean water climate climate accountability climate change climate-change climate crisis climate consulting climate models climate model climate resilience climate risk climate science climatesmart climate smart agriculture climate smart forestry climate variability commercial sex worker community community diversity community equity confirmation bias contaminants of environmental concern continuum Covid-19 critical race theory cultural competence cultural differences cultural heritage Cultural relevance cultural sensitivity culturally appropriate culturally responsive definition DEI DEIA DEIAB DEIJ diesel dietary guidelines ultraprocessed foods disabilities disability disabled disadvantaged discriminated discrimination discriminatory	discussion of federal policies disparity diverse diverse backgrounds diverse communities diverse community diverse group diverse groups diversified diversify diversifying diversity and inclusion diversity, equity, and inclusion diversity/equity efforts diversity in the workplace EEJ EJ elderly electric vehicle energy conversion enhance the diversity enhancing diversity entitlement environmental justice environmental quality 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diversity promoting diversity pronoun pronouns prostitute pyrolysis queer QT race race and ethnicity racial racial diversity racial identity racial inequality racial justice racially racism runoff rural water safe drinking water science-based sediment remediation segregation self-assessed sense of belonging sex sexual preferences sexuality social justice social vulnerability socio cultural sociocultural socio economic socioeconomic status soil pollution solar energy solar power	special populations stem cell or fetal tissue research stereotype stereotypes subsidized housing sustainable construction systemic they/them tile drainage topics of federal investigations topics that have received recent attention from Congress topics that have received widespread or critical media attention trans transgender transgender military personnel transgender people transitional housing transexual transexualism transsexuals trauma traumatic tribal two-spirit unconscious bias under appreciated underprivileged under represented underrepresentation underrepresented underserved under served understudied undervalued vaccines victim victims vulnerable vulnerable populations water collection water conservation water distribution water efficiency water management water pollution water storage water treatment water quality white privilege wind power woman women women and underrepresented
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IMPACT OF THE TRUMP REGIME DEI ORDERS ON AUSTRALIA

There has been elevated pushback on DEI using the argument of MERIT. This has emboldened misogynist elements to push back on women's rights and caused organisations which were never committed to DEI to cease or de-fund their initiatives.

Withdrawal of DEI programs of US based companies and platforms operating in Australia don't just hurt women, but they're also affecting culturally and linguistically diverse people, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, lesbians and gay men, transgender folks, and other diverse groups.



WHAT IS AT STAKE IN AUSTRALIA?



1. Imagine a workplace where the vision impaired are not provided screen readers, where buildings are inaccessible to those in wheelchairs, where those with injuries are not provided ergonomic desks and chairs. At some point we all need support. These DEI initiatives are not just for “others”, they are for all of us (Ng et al., 2025).
2. Discrimination against queer people and homophobia has increased in Australia in the last year. Research at the University of Newcastle has identified ‘religious bigotry in the United States,’ promulgated by Trump’s executive orders and ongoing rhetoric as impacting how some Australian’s are thinking and acting.
3. Use of language to undermine DEI principles. ‘Woke’ is defined as *“alert to racial or social discrimination, violence and injustice.”* So, I’m woke and I’m guessing you are too. We need to be unapologetic about DEI, it’s contributions and confront push-back head on.
4. Be mindful of US content, particularly AI. Biases in data scraping used by AI, and the code produced by all male AI coders in the US tech giants, can perpetuate or widen gender equality gaps. Examples include using AI to generate position descriptions, recruitment adverts and interview protocols. (UN, 2024)



THOUGHTS FOR TURBULENT TIMES



Current US policy on DEI is ideologically driven, largely by a conservative MAGA world view contained in 'Project 2025'. (Ng et al., 2025)

There is absolutely no empirical evidence to support these views as viable organisational strategies (Hamilton et al., 2025). In fact, the contrary is true... and most of this evidence comes from the US itself!!!

Inclusion is the Business Case and so from the point of view of Executive Leadership Teams and other key stakeholders, the ideology emerging from the US must not only be resisted, but be pushed back upon, lest we wish to go back to lower productivity, lower workforce participation and lower employee well-being in our organisations.

The anti-DEI agenda: navigating the impact of Trump's second term on diversity, equity and inclusion

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THANKYOU