

Australian  
Gender  
Equality  
Council

# STATE OF THE NATION

Gender Equality 2025:  
Data and Insights  
20<sup>th</sup> 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

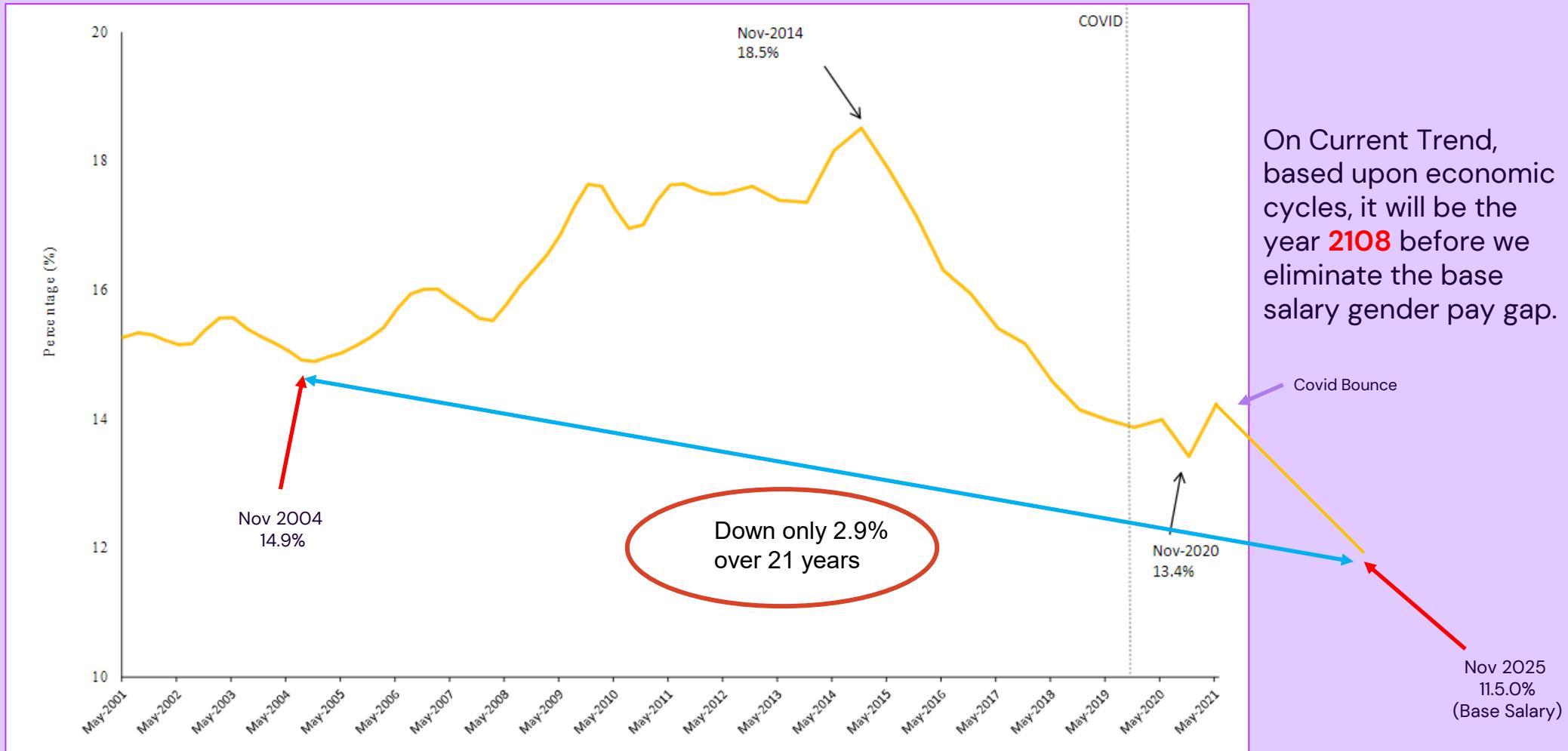


# USING THE GENDER PAY GAP AS A GENDER (IN)EQUALITY LENS

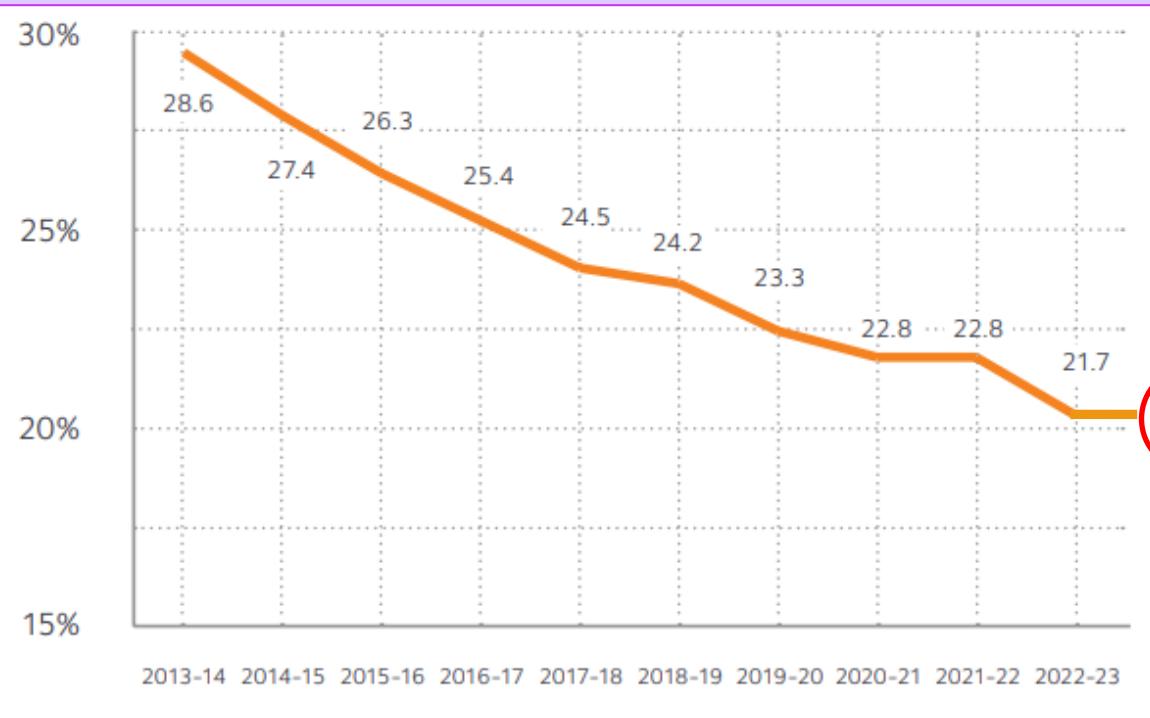
# GENDER PAY GAP (ABS DATA: BASE SALARY) - TREND PREDICTIONS



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



# 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.

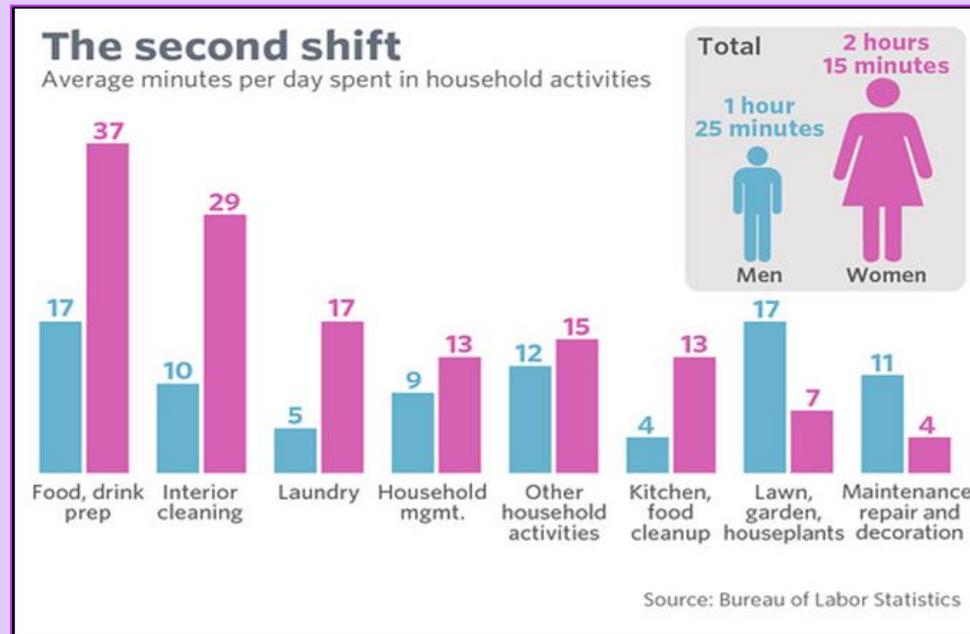
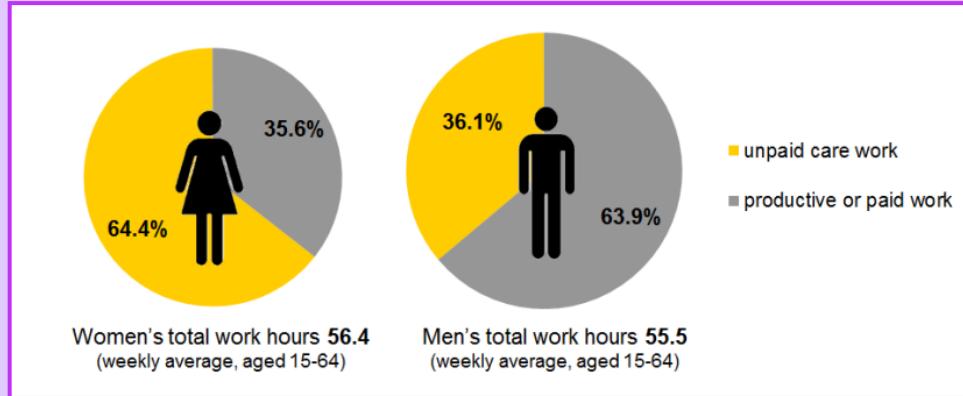
The publication by WGEA of Gender Pay Gap Data from the 27th February 2024 will bring additional pressure for companies to address some, but not all, of these areas.

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.

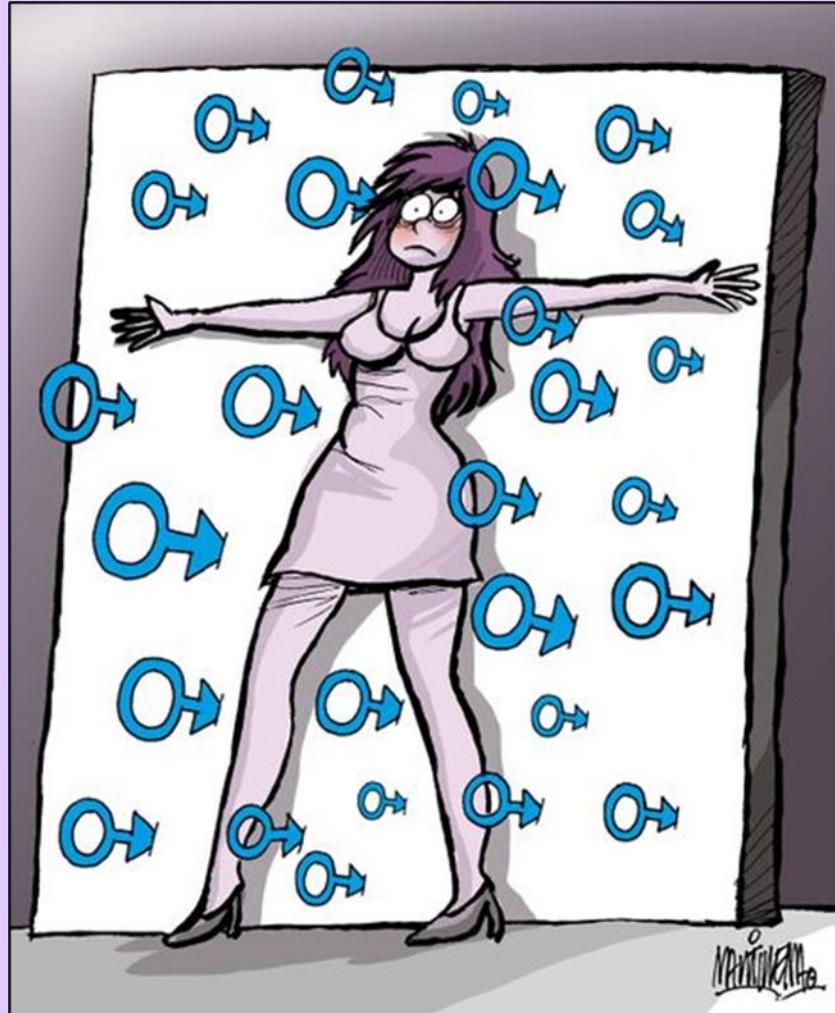
Women represent 90%+ of the carers of the elderly or people with disabilities.

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

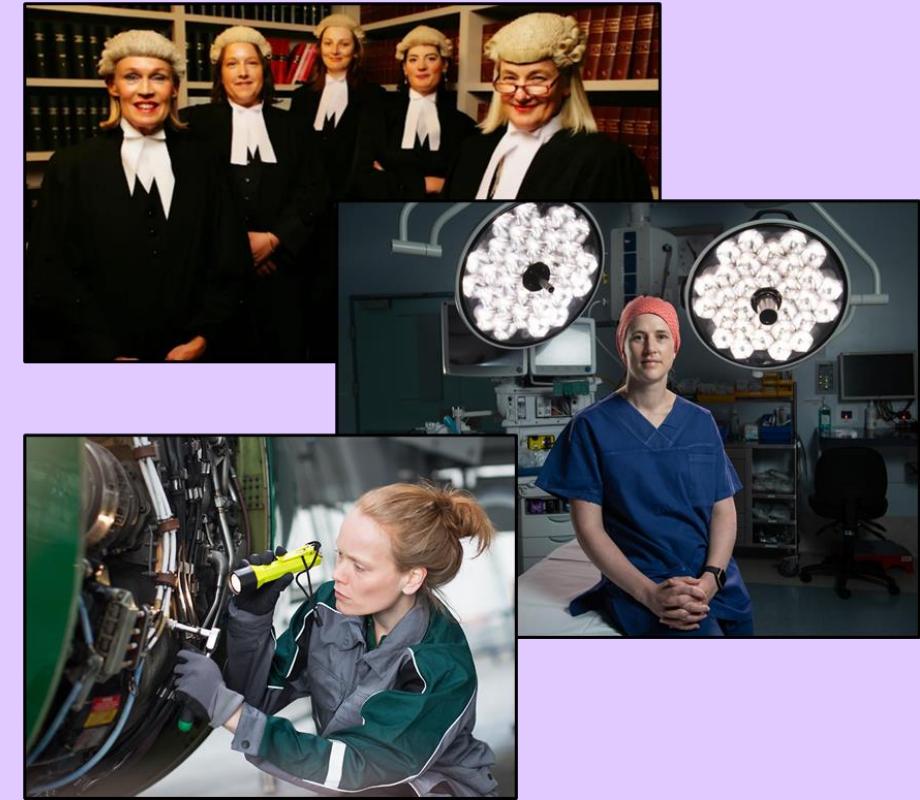


Despite women comprising 50% of Australia's accounting and finance professionals, only 9.2% of registered liquidators are women. Based upon current trends, it will be another 106 years before we see gender parity in Registered Liquidators.

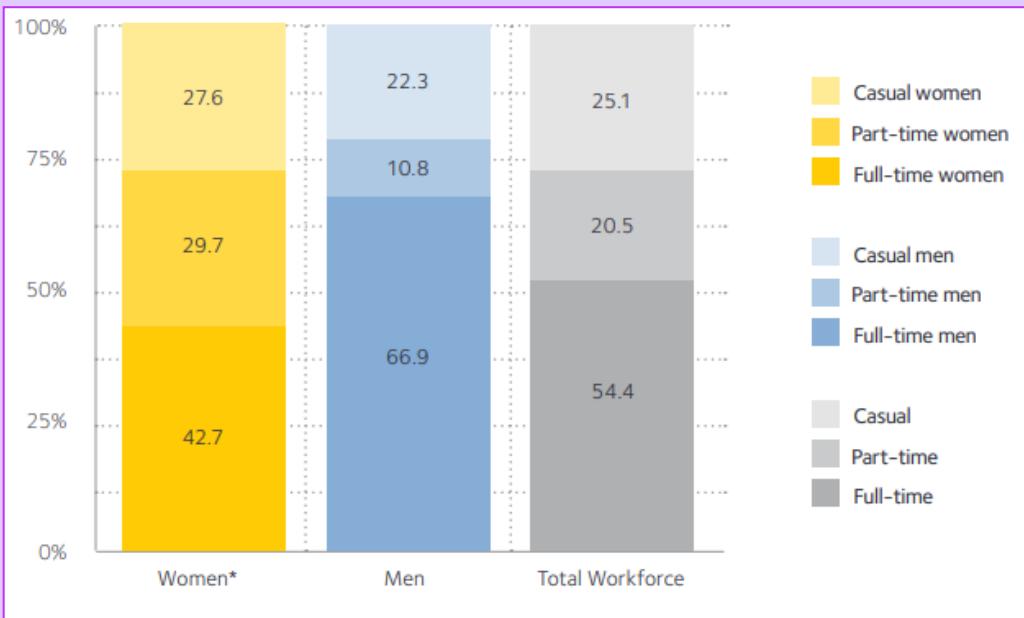
A significant barrier to registration is the current requirement to have 4,000 hours of work on 'Court Appointed' liquidations over a 5-year period.

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.



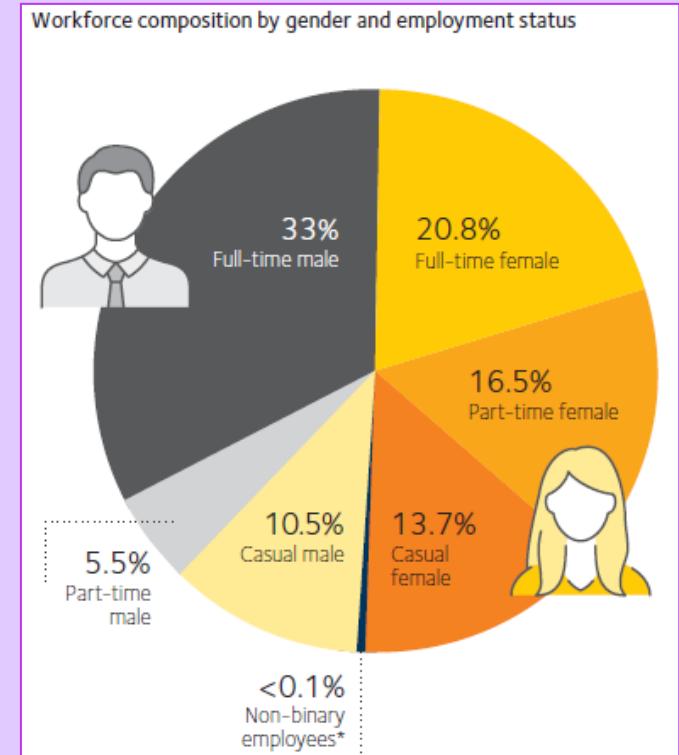
# CAUSAL OF EMPLOYMENT TYPE BY GENDER



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

Women currently represent 51% of the Australian workforce.

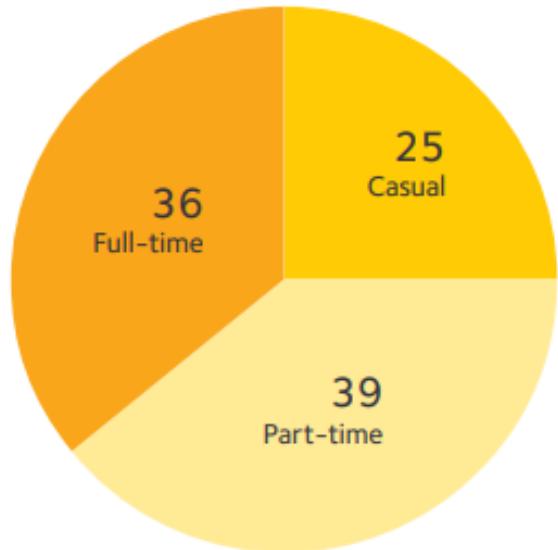
However, women are concentrated in more vulnerable casual and part-time roles.



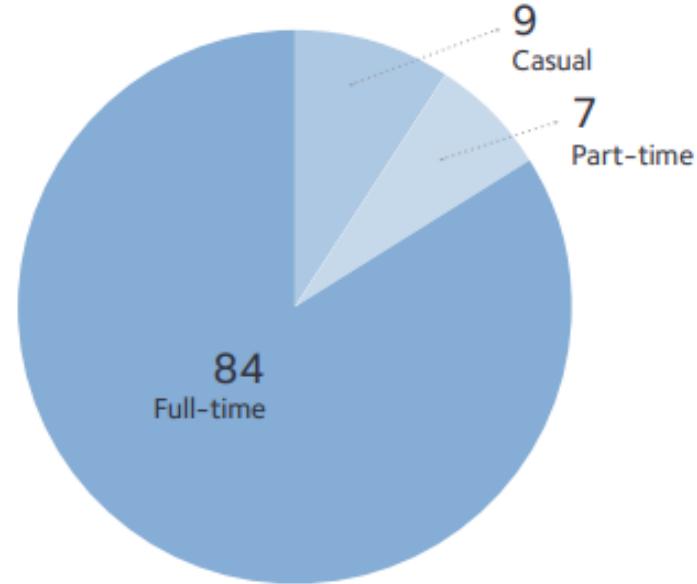
# BARRIERS TO WOMEN IN MALE DOMINATED INDUSTRIES



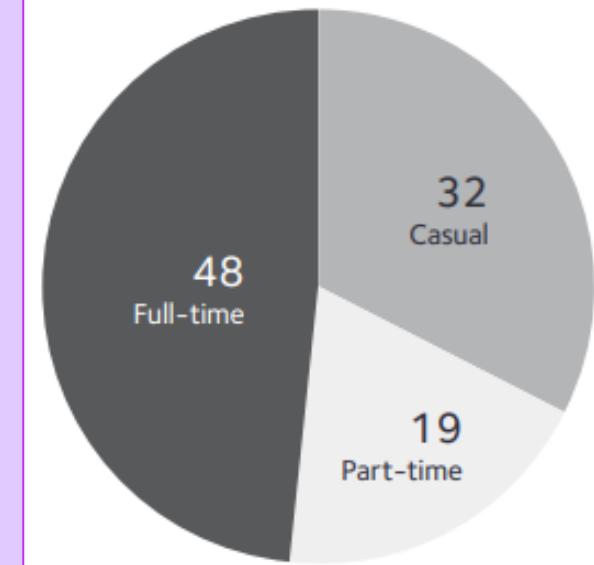
Working patterns of female dominated industries (%)



Working patterns of male dominated industries (%)



Working patterns of gender-mixed 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)



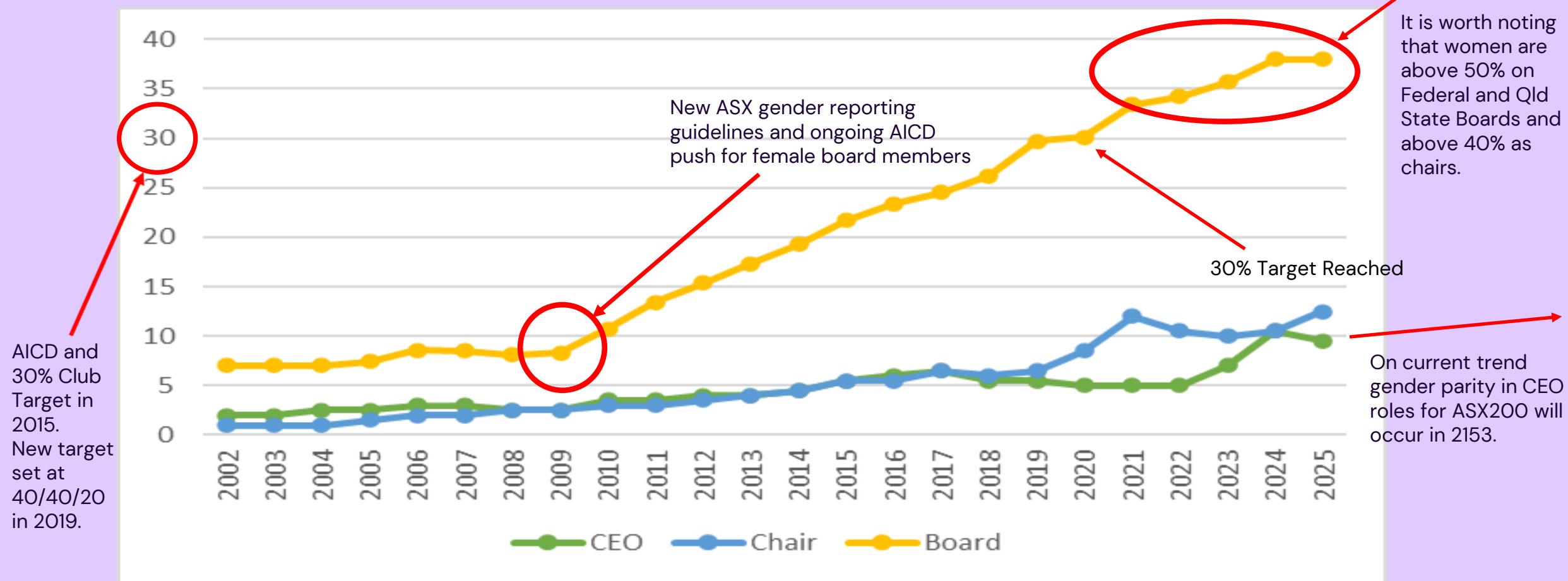
# LEVEL WITHIN THE HIERARCHY

# 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.

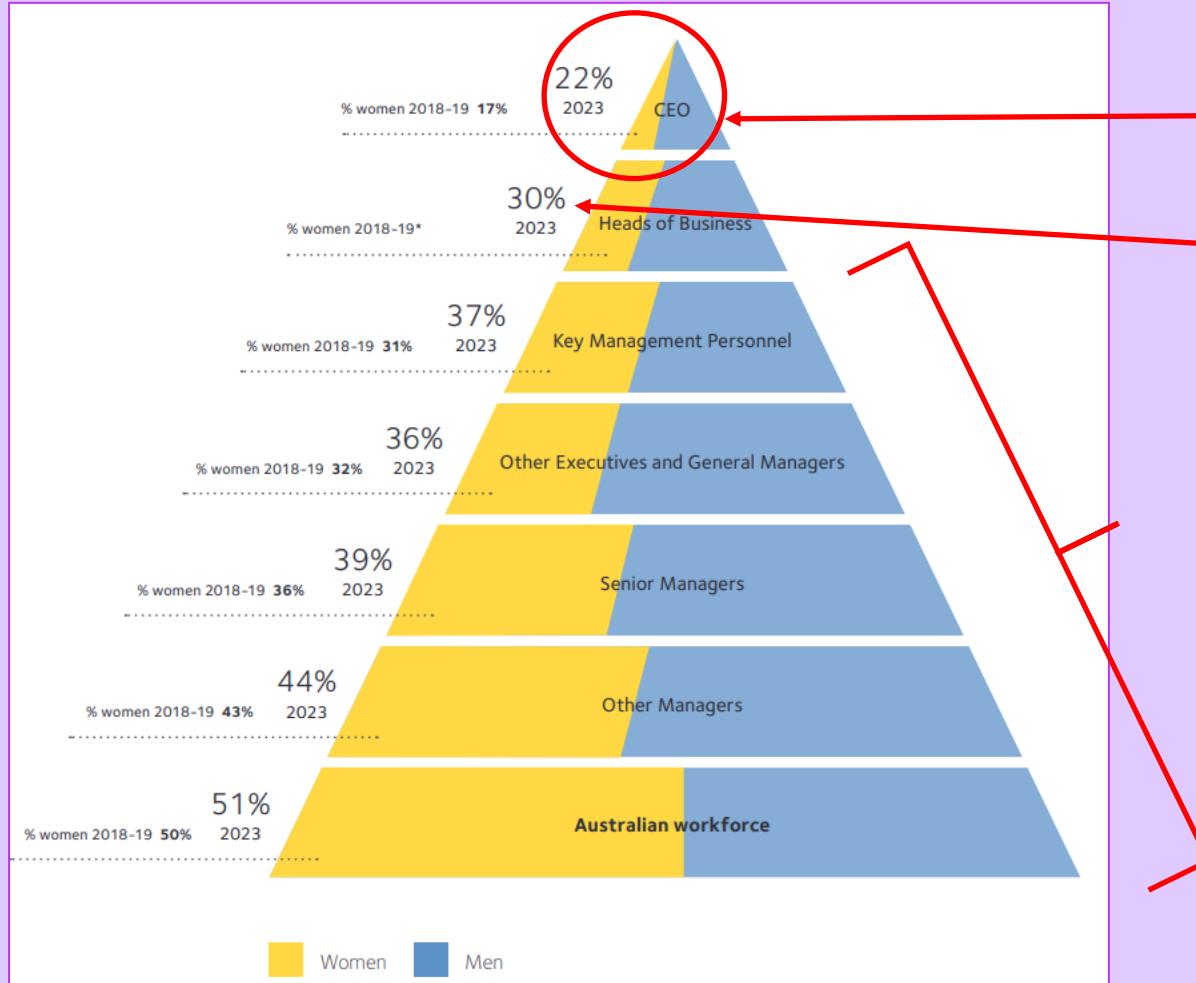


Projected from 'Census of Women in Leadership' EOWA 2002 – 2012,  
ASX Company Database 2013-2025 (Feb 28, 2024), AICD (August 2024)

# 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

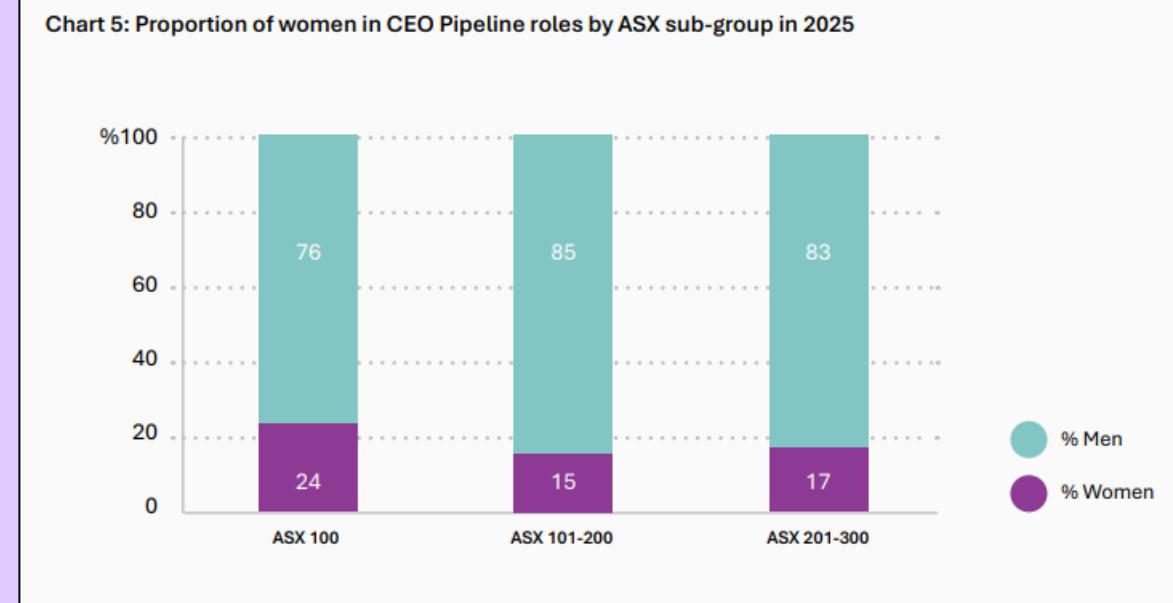
Average of 6.6% total increase over 8 years (parity in 20 years?)  
Unlikely, unless workforce and, particularly, full-time participation rates increase.  
71.1% for men and 63.5% for women. (ABS, 2025)

# 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)

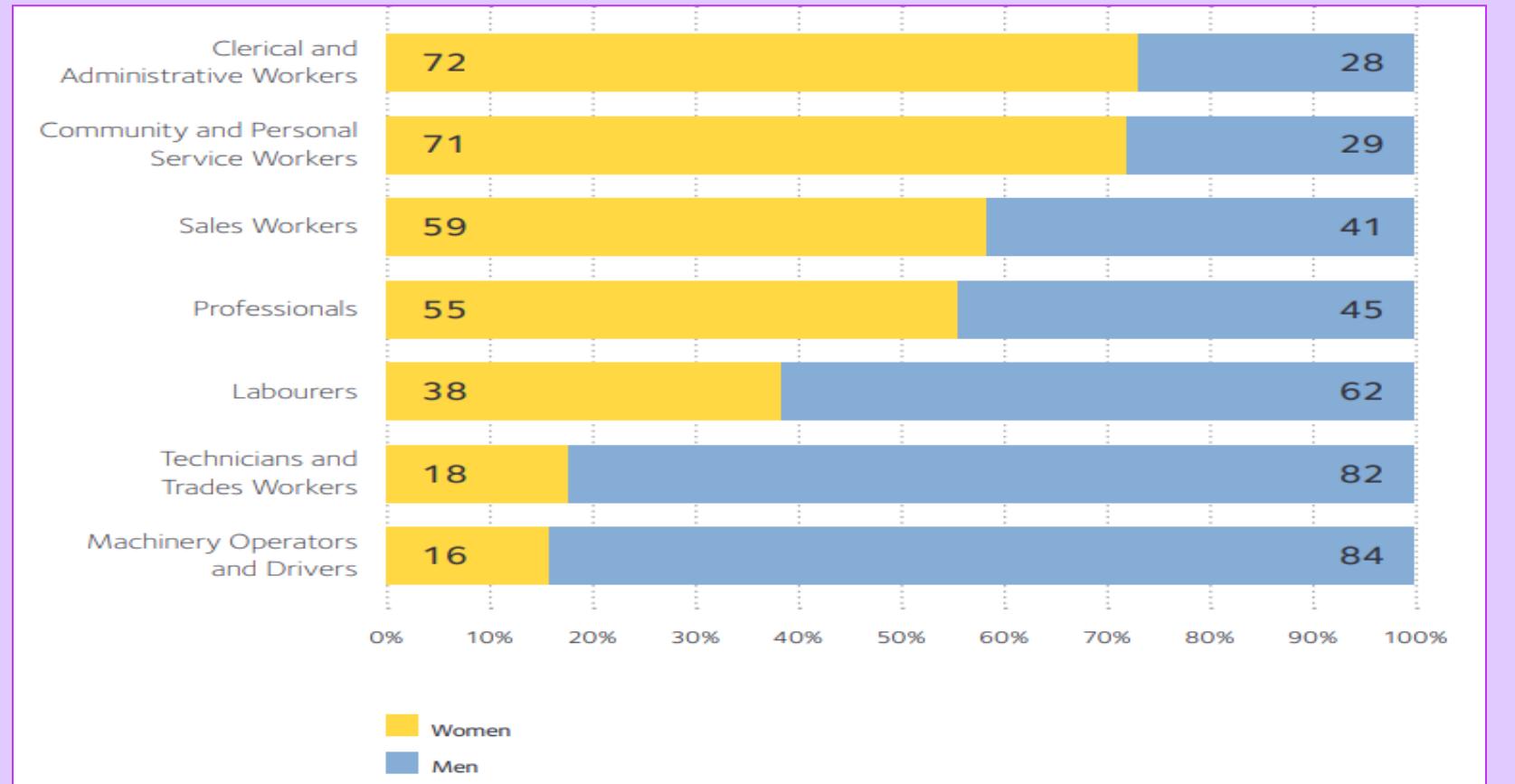


# LIKE-FOR-LIKE ECONOMY WIDE

# 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

# 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



Listen to this article  
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 Ascur

### 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

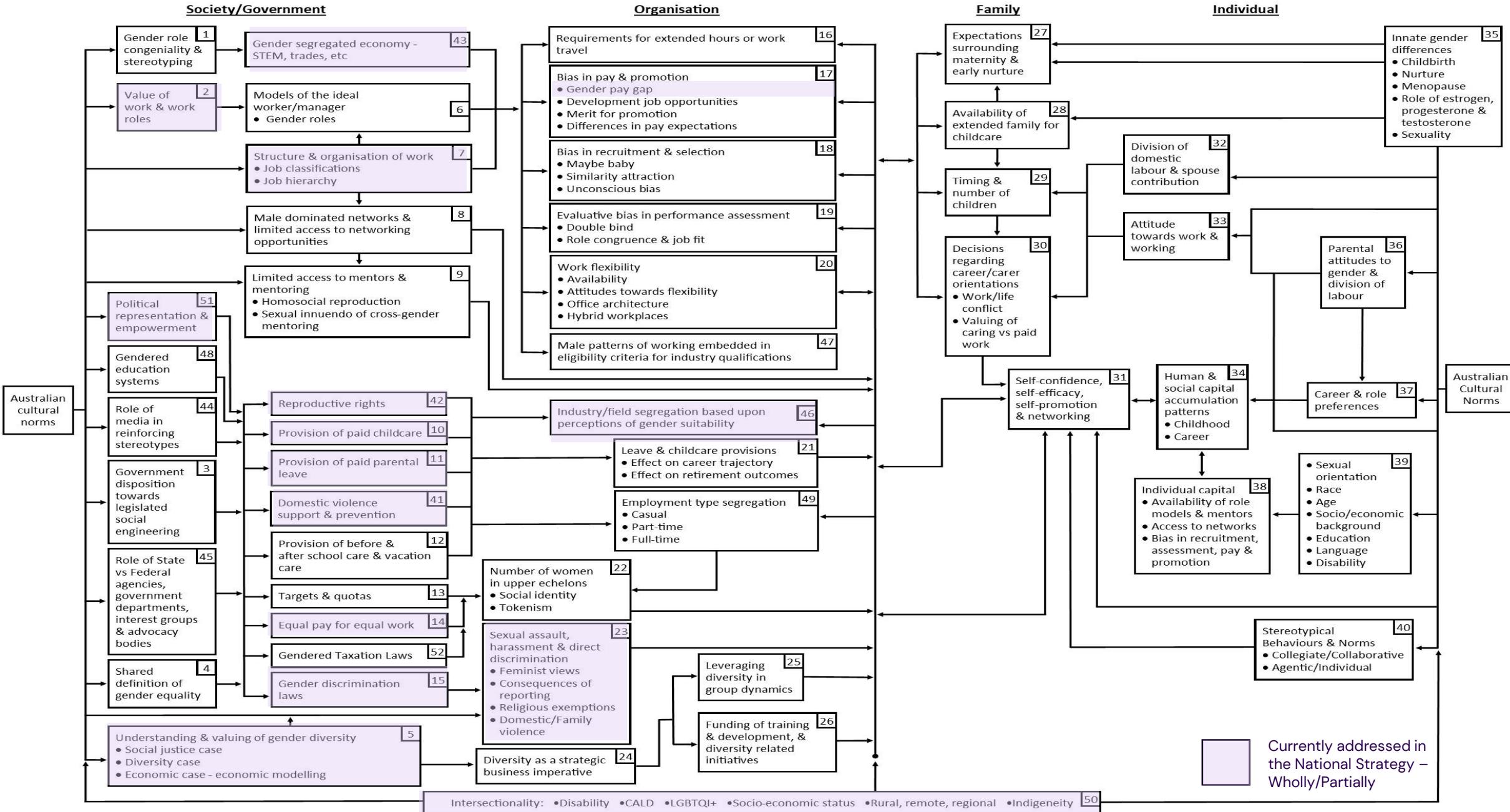


## Median Super Balances by Age

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

## 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





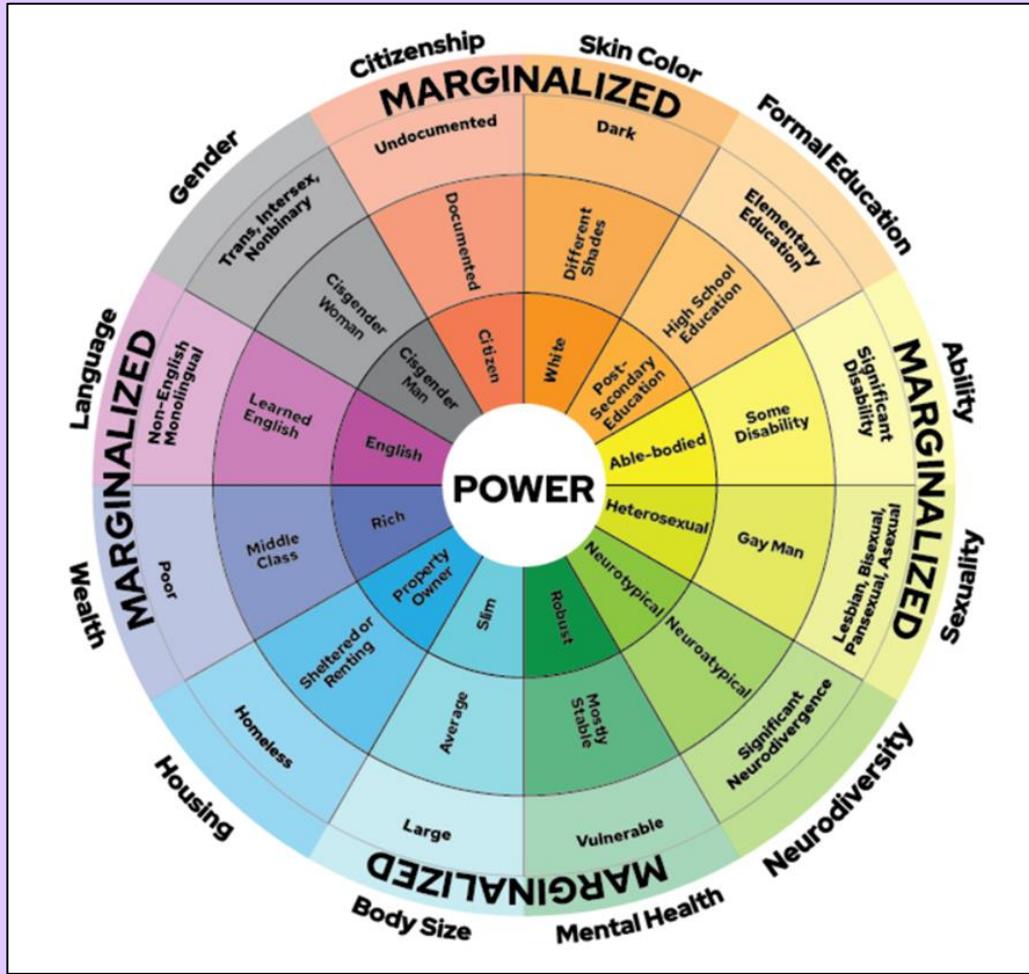
# THE QUESTION OF MERIT



# 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:**  $49\% \text{ (Men)} \times 50\% \text{ (over 5'8')} \times 54\% \text{ (Anglo)} \times 40\% \text{ (over 45 yrs)} \times 95.5\% \text{ (Straight)} \times 78.6\% \text{ (without disability)} \times 50.3\% \text{ (married)} = 2\% \text{ of the Population}$  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>

# 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 20<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

abortion	carbon sequestration	discussion of federal policies	gender dysphoria	issues concerning pending legislation	PFAS	special populations
accessible	CEC	disparity	gender expression	PFOA	polarization	stem cell or fetal tissue research
accessibility	changing climate	diverse	gender identity	justice40	political	stereotype
activism	cheatfeed + people	diverse backgrounds	gender ideology	key groups	pollution	stereotypes
activists	cheatfeed + person	diverse communities	gender-affirming care	key people	pollution abatement	subsidized housing
advocacy	clean energy	diverse community	gender nonconformity	key populations	pollution	sustainable construction
advocate	clean fuel	diverse group	gender transition	Latinx	remediation	systemic
advocates	clean power	diverse groups	genders	lesbian	prefabricated	they/them
affirmative action	clean water	diversified	geothermal	lgbt	housing	tile drainage
affirmative action programs	climate	diversify	GHG emission	LGBTQ	pregnant people	topics of federal investigations
affirming care	climate accountability	diversifying	GHG monitoring	low-emission vehicle	pregnant person	topics that have received recent attention from Congress
affordable home	climate change	diversity	GHG modeling	low-income housing	pregnant persons	topics that have received widespread or critical media attention
affordable housing	climate-change	diversity and inclusion	global warming	male dominated	prejudice	trans
agricultural water	climate crisis	diversity, equity, and inclusion	green	marginalize	privilege	transgender
agrivoltaics	climate consulting	diversity/equity	green infrastructure	marginalized	privileges	transgender military personnel
air pollution	climate models	diversity/equity	greenhouse gas	marijuana	promote	transgender people
all-inclusive	climate model	efforts	emission	measles	promote diversity	transitional housing
allyship	climate resilience	diversity in the workplace	groundwater pollution	membrane filtration	promoting diversity	transexual
alternative energy	climate risk	EJ	Gulf of Mexico	men who have sex with men	pronoun	transexualism
anti-racism	climate science	elderly	H5N1/bird flu	men	pronouns	transexuals
antiracist	climatesmart	electric vehicle	hate	mental health	prostitute	trauma
asexual	climate smart agriculture	energy conversion	hate speech	methane emissions	pyrolysis	tribal
assigned at birth	climate smart forestry	enhance the diversity	health disparity	microplastics	queer	two-spirit
assigned female at birth	climate variability	enhancing diversity	health equity	migrant	QT	unconscious bias
assigned male at birth	commercial sex worker	entitlement	hispanic	minorities	race	under appreciated
at risk	community	environmental justice	hispanic minority	minority	race and ethnicity	underprivileged
autism	community diversity	environmental quality	historically	minority serving institution	racial	underrepresented
aviation fuel	contaminants of environmental concern	equal opportunity	housing affordability	most risk	racial diversity	underrepresented
barrier	continuum	equity	housing efficiency	msm	racial identity	underrepresented
barriers	Covid-19	equitable	hydrogen vehicle	Mx	racial inequality	underrepresented
belong	critical race theory	equitability	identity	MSI	racial justice	underrepresented
bias	cultural competence	equitable	ideology	Native American	racially	victim
biased	cultural differences	equitability	immigrants	NCI budget	racism	victims
Biased toward	cultural heritage	equity	implicit bias	net-zero	runoff	vulnerable
bioenergy	Cultural relevance	ethanol	implicit biases	multicultural	rural water	vulnerable populations
biofuel	cultural sensitivity	ethnicity	inclusion	MSI	safe drinking water	water collection
biogas	culturally appropriate	evidence-based	inclusive	Native American	science-based	water conservation
biomethane	culturally responsive	excluded	inclusive leadership	NCI budget	sediment	water distribution
biases	definition	exclusion	inclusiveness	net-zero	remediation	water efficiency
Biases towards	DEI	expression	inclusivity	nonbinary	segregation	water management
biologically female	DEIA	female	Increase diversity	nonconforming	self-assessed	water pollution
biologically male	DEIAB	females	increase the diversity	noncitizen	sense of belonging	water storage
bipoc	DEIJ	feminism	indigenous	nonpoint source pollution	oppression	water treatment
bisexual	DEIJ	fetus	indigenous community/people	nuclear energy	oppressive	water quality
Black	diesel	field drainage	inequalities	nuclear power	orientation	white privilege
black and latinx	dietary guidelines	fostering inclusivity	inequitable	obesity	pansexual	wind power
breastfeed + people	ultraprocessed foods	fuel cell	inequities	opiods	PCB	women
breastfeed + person	disabilities	GBV	injustice	oppression	peanut allergies	women and underrepresented
Cancer Moonshot	disability	gay	institutional	oppressive	people of color	
carbon emissions mitigation	disabled	gender	integration	orientation	people + uterus	
carbon footprint	disadvantaged	gender based	intersectional	pansexual	people-centered care	
carbon markets	discriminated	gender based	intersectionality	PCB	people-centered care	
carbon pricing	discrimination	violence	intersex	peanut allergies	photovoltaic	
	discriminatory	gender diversity		people-centered care	pollution	
				people-centered care	solar energy	
				photovoltaic	solar power	

Source: <https://pen.org/banned-words-list/>

"Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past." George Orwell "1984"

# IMPACT OF THE TRUMP REGIME DEI ORDERS ON AUSTRALIA

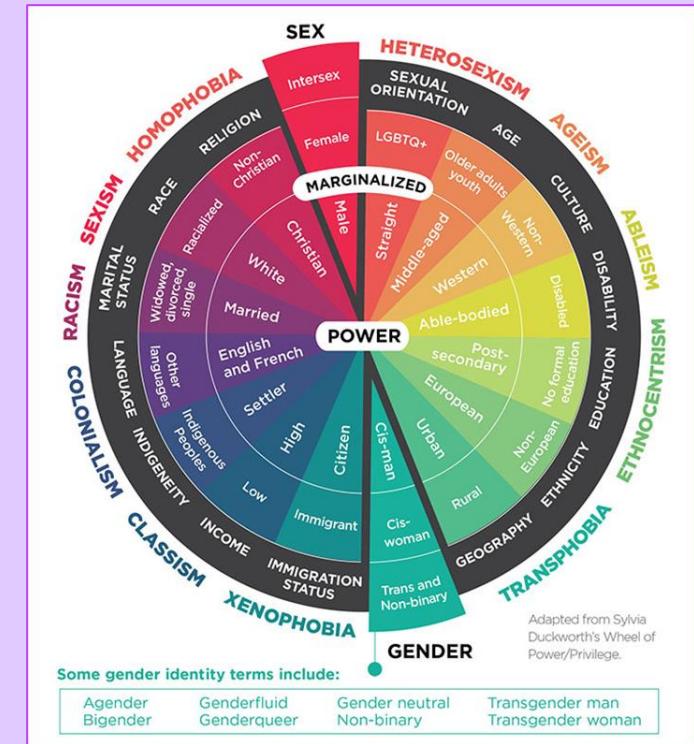


There has been elevated pushback on DEI using the argument of MERIT. This has emboldened misogynist elements to push back on women's rights and caused organisations which were never committed to DEI to cease or de-fund their initiatives.

1. DEI initiatives act to address obstacles and correct disadvantages, so everyone has a fair chance of being hired, promoted and paid, regardless of personal characteristics.
2. DEI initiatives ensure every person has a genuinely equal chance of accessing social goods and an equal chance to collaborate in driving organisational outcomes.

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.

These groups make up more than 70% of our workforce!!!



Wheel of Power, Privilege, and Marginalization  
– Duckworth (2021)

# 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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# THANK YOU