Australian Government

Workplace Gender Equality Agency



Australia's Gender Equality Scorecard

Key results from the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's Employer Census 2026

November 2026

Contents

From the CEO	1
Data snapshot 2026	2
Executive summary	3
Employer results against the Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs)	8
GEI 1: Workforce gender composition	11
GEI 2: Gender balance of governing bodies	19
GEI 3: Equal remuneration between women and men	24
GEI 4: Flexible working arrangements, parental leave and support for carers	32
GEI 5: Employee consultation	42
GEI 6: Prevention of and response to sexual harassment and discrimination	45
Glossary of key terms	53
References	55

You can explore all of WGEA's data, including results at a national, industry and employer level, using the WGEA Data Explorer wgea.gov.au/Data-Explorer

Acknowledgement of Country

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.



Amy Daniel, *Working Together*

From the CEO

This year's Gender Equality Scorecard builds on more than a decade of detailed employer reporting data on workplace gender equality in Australia. While many of the challenges remain familiar, our understanding of the factors driving inequality and what it takes to address them continues to deepen. So too must our response.

There are encouraging signs of progress. The gender pay gap has fallen to 19.7%; below 20% for the first time since reporting to WGEA began. But significant inequalities persist, reminding us that progress is neither inevitable nor complete.

This year marks an important shift. For the first time, the Scorecard brings together Commonwealth public sector and private sector employer data, while larger employers have selected mandatory gender equality targets, making measurable commitments over the next 3 years. Our companion report examines these commitments and what they reveal about employers' priorities. Together, greater transparency and clearer accountability give us an opportunity to accelerate progress and turn evidence into meaningful change.

The Scorecard findings tell a story of progress, but also of persistent barriers.

Women make up 51% of employees and hold 44% of management positions, but account for just 24% of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs). Women and men are promoted into management in proportion to their representation among non-managers, but that balance is not reflected at senior levels. Getting women through the door is only part of the challenge. How we develop, support and retain talent matters just as much as how we recruit it.

Gender segregation across industries and occupations remains deeply entrenched, shaping opportunities and contributing to the gender pay gap. Addressing this means opening up traditionally men-dominated roles to women, and women-dominated roles to men, while also examining how different kinds of work are valued and rewarded. This is an area where WGEA's data and research partnerships can contribute to broader understanding of workforce participation and productivity.

We must also challenge assumptions about who works, who cares and what leadership looks like. Greater access to flexible work, including in senior roles, and opportunities for men to share in caring responsibilities are important to creating workplaces where everyone has equal opportunities to contribute and progress. So too is ensuring that workplaces are safe, respectful and free from harassment and discrimination.

These challenges go to how we design jobs, recognise capability and create opportunities. For WGEA, our task is to put the evidence to work, using data, research and collaboration, working with employers to identify where change is needed, to learn from what works and to turn commitments into results.

We have the evidence, and we have stronger levers to accelerate progress. What matters now is not just what we measure, but what we change.

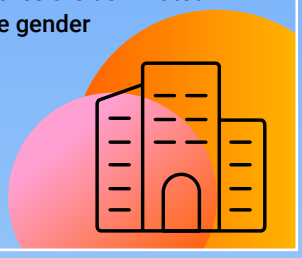




Christine Castley OAM

Data snapshot 2025-26

10 out of 19
industries are dominated by one gender



Women make up half the workforce but hold:

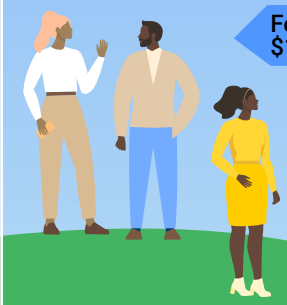
44% of manager roles

24% of CEO roles

34% of board members are women



23% of boards have no women



For every $1 men earn

19.7% WGEA gender pay gap

Women earn **80¢**



Over a year, this adds up to a difference of **$27,467**

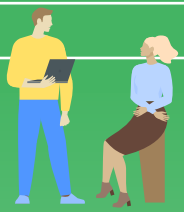


67% of employers conducted a gender pay gap analysis



Of those, **72%** took action on the results

88% of employers have a policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family and domestic violence



29% of women work part-time

compared to **12%** of men

7% of manager roles are part-time



21% of primary carers and universal parental leave was taken by men

66% of employers offer parental leave

73% of employers consult employees on gender equality

99.3% of employers have a policy or strategy to prevent and respond to sexual harassment

91% of CEOs communicate expectations about preventing sexual harassment

91% of employers provide sexual harassment prevention training



27% of employers do not identify workplace and industry specific risks of sexual harassment

23% of employers do not collect data on sexual harassment





Executive summary

The 2026 Gender Equality Scorecard provides Australia's most comprehensive picture of workplace gender equality. It shows continued progress alongside persistent inequalities in how women and men participate in work, advance into leadership and share in economic opportunity.

The national gender pay gap has fallen below 20% for the first time. Women are increasingly represented in management roles and employers are taking greater responsibility for improving gender equality outcomes. However, the data reveal patterns that remain remarkably consistent: occupational segregation, unequal representation in senior leadership and the concentration of women in lower-paid work.

For the first time, this Scorecard brings together data from private sector and Commonwealth public sector employers, covering more than 6 million employees across 9,096 employers. It builds on significant reforms in recent years to strengthen transparency, accountability and action on workplace gender equality in Australia, including expanded reporting on CEO remuneration, sexual harassment and discrimination, employee age and primary workplace location.

A companion report to this year's Scorecard examines the first selection of gender equality targets by employers with 500 or more employees. Together, these developments provide a stronger foundation for understanding where inequalities persist, what contributes to them and where employers need to focus their efforts.

The national gender pay gap is below 20% for the first time

The national average total remuneration gender pay gap is 19.7% across the private sector and Commonwealth public sector. This compares with the private sector gender pay gap of 21.1% in the previous year. This comparison reflects both improvement within the private sector and the inclusion of Commonwealth public sector employers in the combined national result. The private sector gender pay gap declined by 0.8 percentage points (pp), from 21.1% to 20.3%. The inclusion of the Commonwealth public sector, where the gender pay gap is lower, reduced the combined national result by a further 0.6pp.

The decline was accompanied by a slight reduction in the over-representation of women in the lowest pay quartile. There was also an increase in the proportion of women working in full-time, management and leadership roles, as well as stronger earnings growth for women in some large industries, including Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail Trade.

Despite this progress, the 19.7% gender pay gap means that women receive an average of $27,467 less than men when pay is measured based on annualised full-time earnings. This gap reflects a range of structural factors including occupational and industry segregation, unequal access to higher-paid roles and the impact of career interruptions and part-time employment on progression and earning opportunities. The data show that the gap remains particularly pronounced at the upper end of the earnings distribution, where men continue to be over-represented in the highest-paid positions.

Understanding these structural factors enables employers to understand the causes of pay inequality within their own workforces and take targeted action. Around the first publication of employer gender pay gaps in early 2024, the proportion of employers conducting a gender pay gap analysis rose from 55% in 2022-23 to 68% in 2023-24. Among employers that conducted an analysis, the proportion taking action increased from 60% to 75%. Both results were maintained in 2024-25.

The overall results were slightly lower in 2026, with 67% of employers conducting a gender pay gap analysis and 72% of those employers taking action. However, this partly reflects the addition of employers reporting to WGEA for the first time, who are less likely to have established these processes. Among employers that reported in both years, the proportion conducting an analysis increased by 1.5pp, while the proportion taking action remained broadly stable, declining by 0.1pp.

These results point to the need for sustained attention to the factors shaping earnings and career opportunities throughout working lives, and not just adjustments to remuneration at a single point in time. The next test is how continued employer focus on analysing and addressing the causes of pay inequality translates into changes to recruitment, remuneration, promotion, job design and retention to deliver sustained improvements in workplace gender equality.

A new national picture: private sector and Commonwealth public sector

This Scorecard brings together workplace gender equality data from private sector and Commonwealth public sector employers. The comparison between sectors reveals key similarities and differences across workforce composition, employment arrangements, leadership representation and remuneration.

The Commonwealth public sector has a substantially lower gender pay gap of 7.8% compared with 20.3% in the private sector. The difference between sectors is particularly pronounced at the top of the earnings distribution. Women account for 46% of employees in the upper pay quartile in the Commonwealth public sector, compared to 36% in the private sector.

The stronger representation of women in higher-paid roles is accompanied by greater representation in management. Women make up 54% of managers in the Commonwealth public sector, closely reflecting their overall representation in the workforce. In contrast, women account for 51% of employees in the private sector but hold only 43% of management roles.

However, greater representation in management does not necessarily translate into equal representation at the highest levels. Women hold 41% of CEO roles in the Commonwealth public sector, compared with 24% in the private sector. Representation is stronger on public sector governing boards, where women account for 55% of board members and 46% of board chairs, compared to 34% and 22% respectively in the private sector.

The 2 sectors also differ significantly in workforce composition and employment arrangements. The Commonwealth public sector has a higher proportion of professionals, clerical and administrative workers and managers, with 86% of Commonwealth public sector employees working in these occupations compared to 46% in the private sector. Full-time employment is also more common in the public sector: 85% compared to 54% in the private sector.

These differences reflect, in part, the sectors' distinct workforce composition, employment arrangements and remuneration systems. Bringing the data together provides a more comprehensive national benchmark and new opportunities to examine the workplace practices associated with different gender equality outcomes.

Participation, progression and retention

Gender segregation remains an entrenched feature of the Australian workforce. Women and men are represented in the workforce in broadly equal numbers but continue to be concentrated in different industries, occupations and levels of seniority, contributing to differences in earnings, career opportunities and access to leadership.

Women are more likely to work part-time, while men are more likely to work full-time and in higher-paid occupations and industries. This reflects not only individual circumstances, but also how jobs are designed, how caring responsibilities are accommodated and whether people have genuine opportunities to progress in different occupations and industries.

Recruitment is an important starting point in tackling occupational segregation. Employers need to examine how roles are advertised, how candidates are attracted and assessed and whether established assumptions about experience, availability or suitability are unnecessarily narrowing the talent pool.

Women's representation in management declines as the seniority of positions increases. Women are also under-represented in the highest pay quartiles at 36%. Women hold 24% of CEO roles and 22% of board chair roles in the private sector, demonstrating that greater participation is not translating into equal access to senior leadership positions.

The data highlight why recruitment alone is not enough. Women continue to face barriers to progression and retention, including limited access to flexible management roles, uneven career development opportunities and the consequences of interrupted or reduced-hours employment. Women managers account for a disproportionate share of resignations (46%) relative to their representation in management (44%). This highlights the importance of examining retention alongside recruitment and promotion.

Most employers have formal policies or strategies to support gender equality (89%), diversity and inclusion (82%), and flexible work (89%). Yet only 3 in 5 employers specifically address retention in their gender equality policies or strategies. This points to a need for workforce planning that considers who is recruited, who progresses, who stays and who leaves, and whether the way work is organised enables the best possible access to available talent.

Recruitment, promotion and resignation data, employee feedback and exit interviews can help identify where career pathways are narrowing and where workplace practices may hamper efforts to improve gender balance in talent retention and progression.

Safe and respectful workplaces are fundamental to gender equality

This Scorecard shows employers are increasingly adopting policies, reporting mechanisms and preventative measures to address sexual harassment and discrimination. Most employers (99.3%) have set expectations about employee safety at work through policies and strategies to prevent sexual harassment. Most employers (89%) also include leadership accountabilities and responsibilities for prevention and response to sexual harassment in policies or strategies.

More employers are monitoring and reporting on the effectiveness of their prevention and response measures. 77% of employers are collecting data on sexual harassment, with public sector employers more likely (94%) to collect this information than private sector employers (77%). More employers are reporting information on sexual harassment to the CEO (up 2pp from 2024-25 to 93%) and governing body (up 3pp to 79%). Most employers (83%) include the outcomes of reports of sexual harassment in these reports. However, fewer include prevalence statistics (57%), effectiveness of responses to reports of sexual harassment (38%), or analysis of sexual harassment trends (35%), all of which are integral to informing comprehensive, dynamic and appropriate prevention efforts.

There is encouraging progress as employers respond to strengthened legal obligations to prevent sexual harassment and related unlawful conduct. However, the existence of policies and reporting mechanisms is not, in itself, evidence that workplaces are safer. The effectiveness of employer action depends on whether risks are identified and addressed, leaders are held accountable, employees feel confident raising their concerns and information from complaints and other sources leads to meaningful prevention and corrective action.

Fewer than 1 in 6 employers include information about performance against the 7 standards outlined in the Australian Human Rights Commission's Guidelines for complying with the positive duty under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)*. Measuring this performance is important to enhance visible and proactive oversight by senior leadership and focus efforts for employer prevention and response to sexual harassment in the workplace.

Gender Equality Targets: From commitments to action

1,978 employers with 500 or more employees selected gender equality targets for the first time following amendments to the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. These employers must meet or demonstrate improvement against each target by the end of the 3-year target cycle. Together, these employers represent over 4 million employees across Australia.

The most selected target was improving gender balance in non-manager occupations, chosen by 636 employers. Improving employee consultation on gender equality and increasing gender balance in management were also among the most selected targets, highlighting employers' focus on occupational segregation, leadership representation and employee engagement to inform gender equality initiatives in the workplace.

Employers also made commitments to address gender pay gaps and improve workplace conditions. An additional 1.16 million employees will work for employers committed to undertaking an annual gender pay gap analysis and reporting findings to their governing bodies, while 1.26 million employees are covered by commitments to improve consultation on gender equality issues.

These commitments provide an important baseline for future analysis. Over the next 3 years, WGEA will continue to review employer data, identify emerging trends and provide research, insights and practical guidance to support employers in translating their commitments into measurable change.

The 2026 Scorecard shows that Australia is making progress, but persistent structural inequalities continue to limit opportunity. Greater transparency, stronger evidence and clearer accountability provide an opportunity to accelerate change. The challenge now is to translate that evidence into sustained action to deliver lasting change in Australian workplaces.





Employer results against the Gender Equality Indicators

Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, employers with 100 or more employees are required to report to WGEA annually against 6 gender equality indicators (GEIs):

GEI 1	Gender composition of the workforce
GEI 2	Gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employers
GEI 3	Equal remuneration between women and men
GEI 4	Availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
GEI 5	Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace
GEI 6	Sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination.

The GEIs represent the most pressing areas for employers to address in order to advance workplace gender equality. As the below results show, the drivers and outcomes of the GEIs can intersect, reinforce and influence one another, shaping how women and men participate in the workforce.

About the 2026 dataset

The results in this section are from 9,096 employers that submitted their Gender Equality Reports to WGEA by 1 September 2026. This includes 126 Commonwealth public sector employers and 8,970 private sector employers.

The results speak to the experiences of 6,011,748 employees in the Australian workforce. 51.2% of those employees are women, 48.5% are men, and 0.3% identify as non-binary.

WGEA created the option for employers to voluntarily report employee gender as non-binary in 2020-21. During that year, 8.8% of employers reported at least one employee as non-binary gender identifying. In total, non-binary gender identifying employees accounted for 0.1% of all employees represented in the information reported by employers to WGEA in 2020-21. In 2026, 22.8% of employers reported at least one employee with non-binary gender identity. Due to the voluntary nature of this information and the small number of non-binary employees relative to the total employee sample, the employee findings in this Scorecard are based on women and men.

In the Scorecard figures, women are represented in orange and men are represented in blue.

Figure 1: Gender composition of the workforce

Gender composition of the workforce	Women	Men	Non-binary
Number of employees	3,078,493	2,914,947	18,308
Proportion of employees (%)	51.2	48.5	0.3

The employers that report to WGEA operate in 19 industries. WGEA uses the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) to specify industry. More detailed breakdowns of the employer reports by ANZSIC Group and Class can be found on WGEA's Industry Data Explorer.

Of the 19 industries, 2 are women-dominated, 9 are gender-balanced and 8 are men-dominated in terms of the overall representation of women and men in the industry.



Figure 2: Gender composition of the workforce, by industry

Industry	IGC	Number of employees	Employees (%)	Number of employers	Employers (%)
Health Care and Social Assistance		1,025,598	17.1	1,336	14.7
Retail Trade		829,729	13.8	543	6.0
Education and Training		586,505	9.8	756	8.3
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services		467,500	7.8	1,032	11.3
Manufacturing		389,585	6.5	908	10.0
Accommodation and Food Services		371,171	6.2	635	7.0
Financial and Insurance Services		348,255	5.8	424	4.7
Administrative and Support Services		343,234	5.7	584	6.4
Transport, Postal and Warehousing		272,793	4.5	404	4.4
Public Administration and Safety		250,054	4.2	155	1.7
Wholesale Trade		209,106	3.5	533	5.9
Mining		208,099	3.5	289	3.2
Construction		197,002	3.3	485	5.3
Arts and Recreation Services		119,966	2.0	193	2.1
Information Media and Telecommunications		114,332	1.9	180	2.0
Other Services		107,221	1.8	279	3.1
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services		70,157	1.2	104	1.1
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services		57,025	0.9	144	1.6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		44,416	0.7	112	1.2
Total private sector		**5,729,941**	**95.3**	**8,970**	**98.6**
Total public sector		**281,807**	**4.7**	**126**	**1.4**
Total all industries		**6,011,748**	**100**	**9,096**	**100**

IGC: **Industry gender composition** Women-dominated Gender-balanced Men-dominated

GEI 1
Workforce gender composition



Australia's workforce remains deeply divided along gender lines. Only half of employees (49%) work in a gender-balanced industry, where women and men each make up at least 40% of the workforce. The gender imbalance is even more pronounced for individual workplaces, with only 1 in 3 employees (34%) working for a gender-balanced employer.

This pattern reflects the different occupations and industries in which women and men work. More than half of women in the workforce are employed in Health Care and Social Assistance, Retail Trade or Education and Training, while industries such as Construction and Mining are heavily men-dominated.

Similar gendered patterns are evident in leadership and decision-making. While women make up around half of all employees, they hold only 44% of management positions. The representation of women in management declines with age and seniority, with women holding just 24% of CEO roles.

Together, these findings highlight interconnected forms of workplace gender segregation. Horizontal segregation occurs when women and men are concentrated in different industries and occupations. Vertical segregation occurs when women are under-represented in management and leadership levels.

The uneven distribution of women and men across the labour market reflects longstanding gender norms, caring responsibilities, access to flexible work and structural barriers to career progression. In turn, they shape who does what work, who progresses and what they earn.

Gender continues to shape where people work and what they earn

Horizontal segregation shapes both individual opportunities and labour market outcomes. Industries and occupations vary considerably in their gender composition and how much the average employee earns. These differences are a major driver of the gender pay gap and can affect employers' access to skills and talent, contributing to workforce shortages and limiting productivity in some sectors.

Gender composition of industries

10 out of 19 industries have fewer than 40% women or 40% men. This includes 8 men-dominated industries and 2 women-dominated industries.

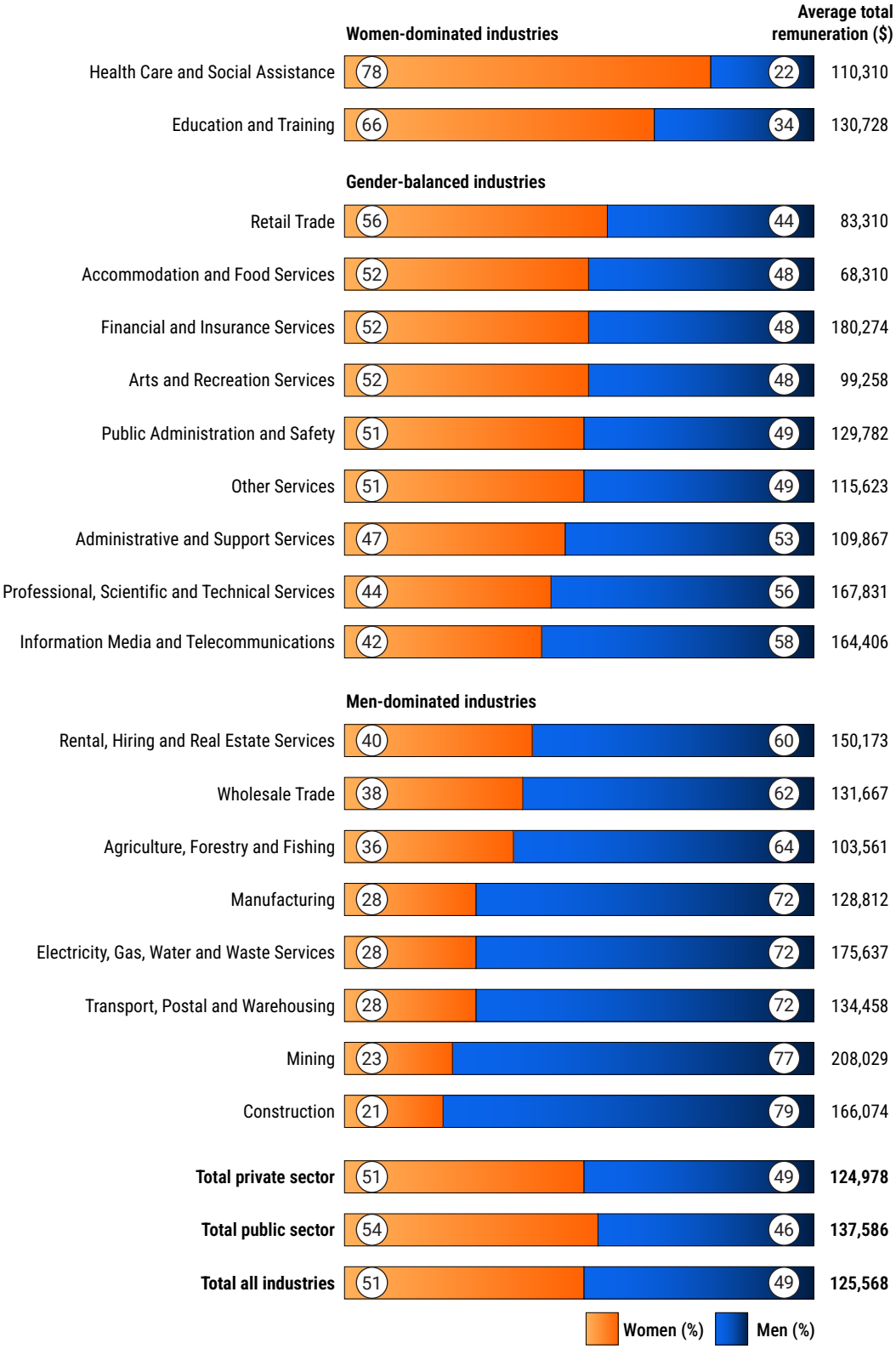
Employees in men-dominated industries earn more, on average, than those in women-dominated industries. With the exception of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing, the average remuneration in all men-dominated industries exceeds the national average.

Health Care and Social Assistance is the most women-dominated industry and the largest employer of women, with women comprising 78% of employees. Average remuneration in the industry ($110,310) is well below the national average ($125,568). As a result, the concentration of women in the industry significantly contributes to the national gender pay gap.

By contrast, Education and Training is also women-dominated, with women accounting for 66% of employees, yet average remuneration is slightly above the national average. This shows that gender composition alone does not determine an industry's contribution to the gender pay gap. However, even where industry composition does not widen the gender pay gap, gender segregation can still limit the available talent pool and contribute to workforce shortages.

Despite these consequences, progress towards greater gender balance has been slow. Between 2024-25 and 2026, most industries recorded no change in their gender composition, while the remainder shifted by 2pp or less. The only exception was Public Administration and Safety. However, this reflects the inclusion of additional Commonwealth public sector employers rather than a significant shift in workforce composition.

Figure 3: Gender composition and average total remuneration, by industry



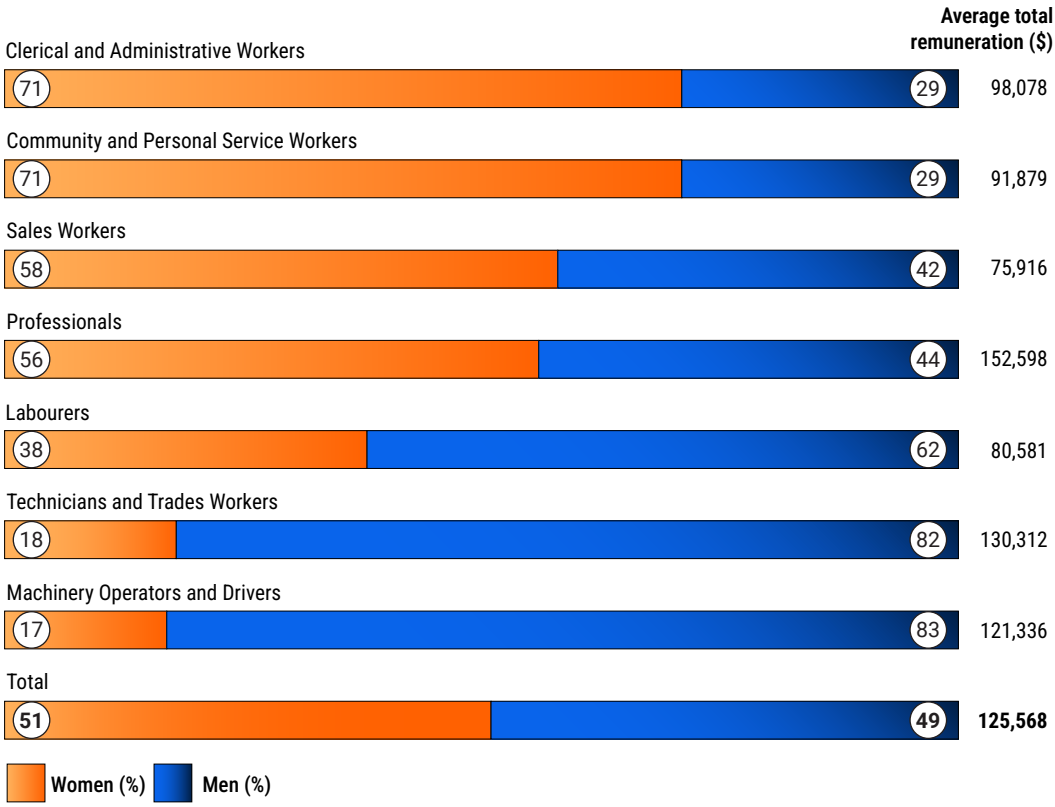
Gender composition of occupations

Industry composition tells only part of the story. While industry segregation reflects where women and men work, occupational segregation reflects the work they do. Even within the same industry, women and men can be employed in occupations that offer different working conditions, career opportunities and average earnings.

Only 2 of the 7 major occupational groups in Figure 4 are gender-balanced. Women are more likely to work as Clerical and Administrative Workers and Community and Personal Service Workers, while men are more likely to work as Technicians and Trades Workers and Machinery Operators and Drivers. Average remuneration is lower in these women-dominated occupations than in the men-dominated occupations, meaning these differences contribute to the gender pay gap.

Between 2024-25 and 2026, Clerical and Administrative Workers was the only occupational group to record a change in gender composition. However, as with Public Administration and Safety, this reflects the inclusion of Commonwealth public sector employers rather than a substantial change in workforce composition, with no shift in the gender composition of private sector employers.

Figure 4: Gender composition and average total remuneration, by non-manager occupation



Women's representation falls as seniority increases

Vertical segregation shapes who has access to leadership opportunities and decision-making roles within organisations. Women and men are represented differently across management and seniority levels, with women often under-represented in senior leadership positions and men more likely to hold higher-paid leadership roles. These differences contribute to the gender pay gap, influence career progression and lifetime earnings, and can limit the diversity of perspectives available in organisational leadership.

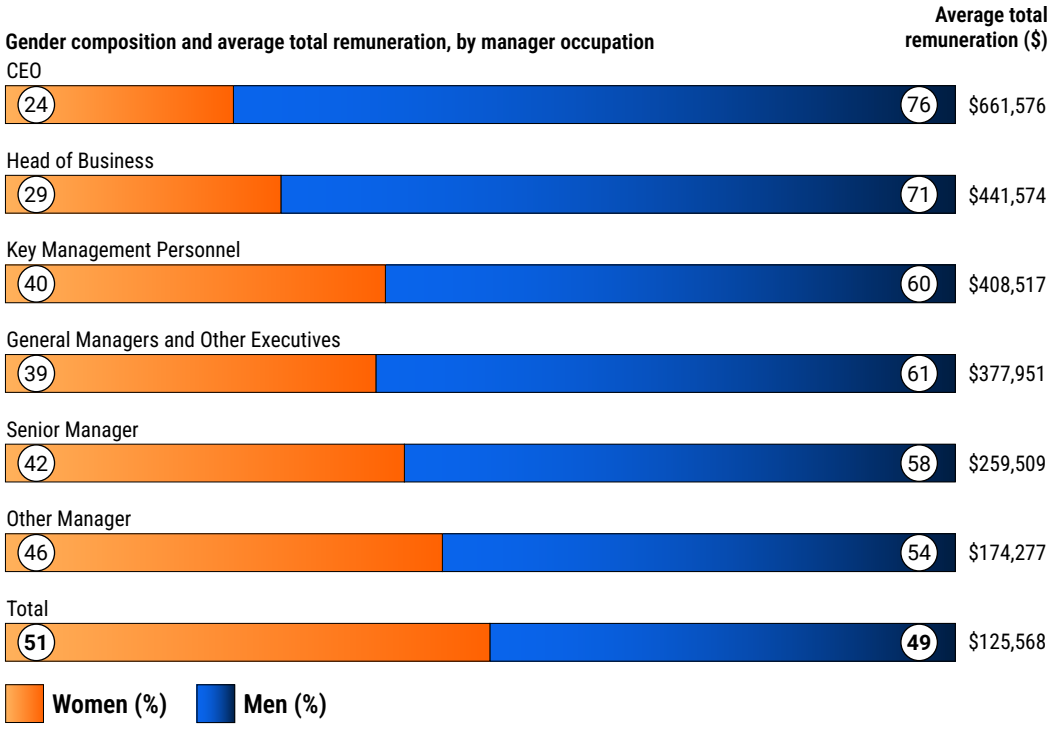
Gender composition of managers

Women make up 51% of employees but hold 44% of manager positions overall. Men hold the majority of positions at every management level and women's representation declines as seniority increases.

The sharpest decline occurs at the most senior levels of leadership. Women hold 40% of Key Management Personnel roles but make up only 29% of Heads of Business and 24% of CEOs. These senior executive roles carry significant responsibility for shaping the direction and culture within an organisation.

Gender disparities can also be less visible in these leadership positions within an organisation because CEO and Head of Business roles are typically held by a single person. Although an employer can aim for gender balance across a broader leadership team, there is no equivalent balance within a single CEO role. It is only when leadership representation is viewed across the national workforce that the extent of women's under-representation in the most senior leadership positions becomes clear.

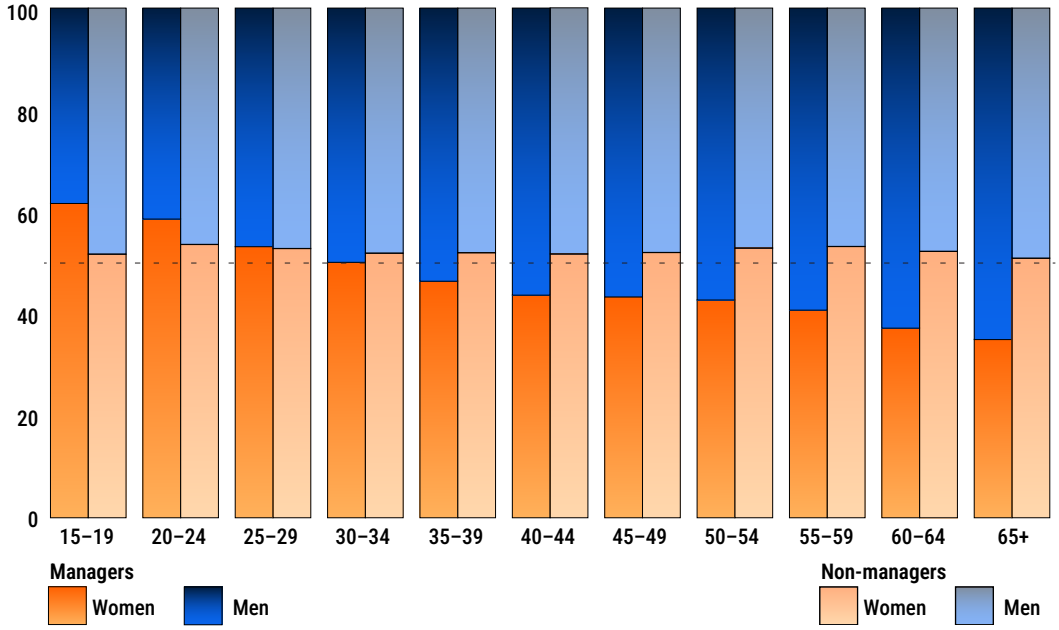
Figure 5: Gender composition and average total remuneration, by manager occupation



Gender composition across age groups

Women and men are represented in similar proportions among non-managers across every age group. However, gender differences emerge in management roles as employees progress through their careers. From age 35–39 onwards, manager positions are more likely to be held by men and women's representation in management generally declines with age. This pattern suggests that women and men are not progressing into, advancing through or remaining in management roles at the same rate over the course of their careers.

Figure 6: Gender composition (%) by age and manager category



Employee movements

Tracking appointments, promotions and resignations helps employers understand how workforce movements affect the gender composition of management. By comparing the gender composition of employees entering and leaving management with the current gender composition of managers, employers can assess whether these movements are likely to increase, maintain or reduce women's representation over time.

Women account for 52% of non-managers and 44% of managers. Women also account for 52% of employees promoted from non-manager to manager roles, indicating that women move into management through this pathway in proportion to their representation among non-managers. As this is 8pp higher than women's current representation among managers, these promotions contribute to improved gender balance in management.

Similarly, women account for 49% of internal appointments and promotions to manager, which is 5pp higher than their current representation among managers. As a result, employees entering management through these pathways are more gender-balanced than the existing management workforce, increasing women's representation over time.

By contrast, women account for 44% of external appointments to manager, which is equal to their current representation among managers. External appointments are therefore maintaining the existing gender composition of management representation, rather than contributing to further change.

While appointments and promotions are contributing to improved gender balance, women account for 46% of manager resignations despite holding 44% of these positions. Therefore, higher rates of resignations among women managers offset some of the gains achieved through women entering leadership roles. This highlights the importance of retaining women in leadership, as improvements in representation depend not only on who enters management, but also on who remains.

Figure 7: Appointments, promotions and resignations by manager category

	Non-manager		Manager	
Pathways into management	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)
Proportion of employees	52	48	44	56
External appointments	51	49	44	56
Internal appointments	51	49	49	51
Promotions	49	51	49	51
Promotions from non-manager to manager	–	–	52	48
Resignations	53	47	46	54

Employers are strengthening their approach to diversity and inclusion in the workplace

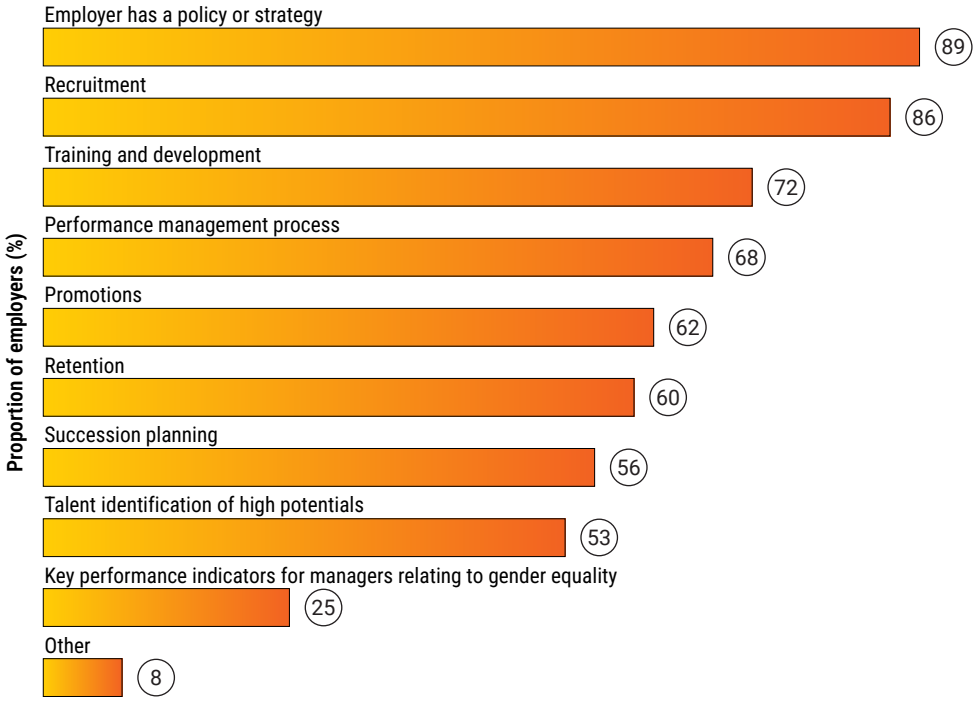
Workplace outcomes are influenced not only by the composition of the workforce but also by the policies and practices employers put in place to support gender equality. Effective policies can help broaden access to opportunities and reduce barriers that contribute to gender inequality over the course of a career.

Gender equality policies

Almost 9 in 10 employers (89%) have a formal policy or strategy in place to support gender equality in the workplace. While this is slightly lower than the 91% reported in 2024-25, the decline was driven largely by the addition of new reporting employers, which have fewer gender equality policies in place than employers with a longer reporting history. Policy coverage among employers reporting in both years remained broadly stable.

Most commonly, employer policies and strategies to support gender equality incorporate recruitment, training and development, and performance management processes. However, only 60% of employers reported including retention measures. This represents an important opportunity for improvement, particularly given women continue to resign at a higher rate relative to their representation in the workforce.

Figure 8: Policy inclusions to support gender equality in the workplace



Percentage is of all employers.

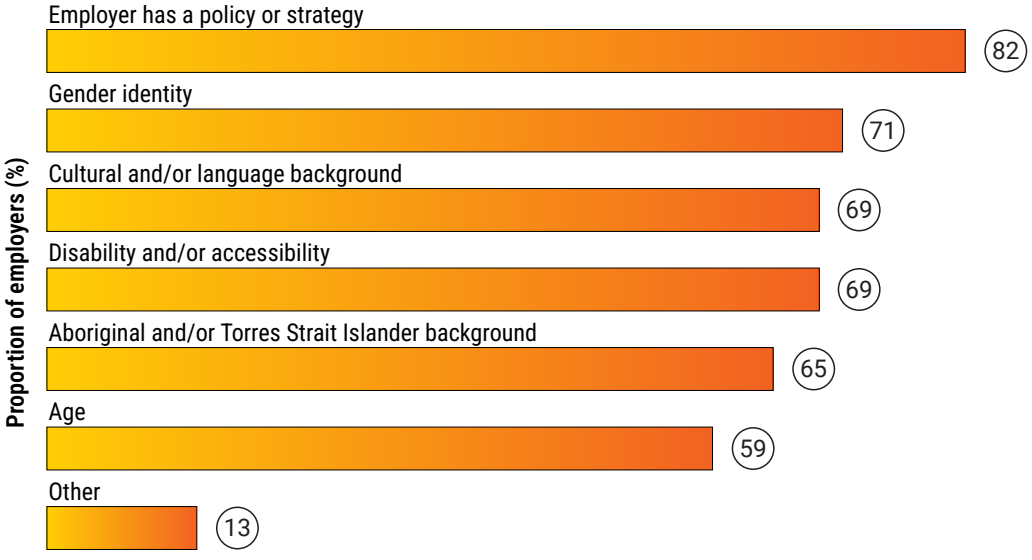
Diversity and inclusion policies

More than 4 in 5 employers (82%) have a formal diversity and inclusion policy or strategy in place. This represents an increase from 78% in 2024-25 and reflects continued progress in employers' efforts to build more inclusive workplaces. Unlike the decline in gender equality policies, this increase was driven by a genuine rise in policy adoption among employers.

Supporting diversity and inclusion is an important part of advancing gender equality. An intersectional approach recognises that people's experiences at work are shaped not only by gender, but also by factors such as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander background, age, disability and cultural background.

Most commonly, employer diversity and inclusion policies and strategies cover gender identity, cultural and/or language background, and disability and/or accessibility. Employers who reported 'Other' indicated that their policies also address characteristics such as sexual orientation, carer status, religion, veteran status, race and ethnicity.

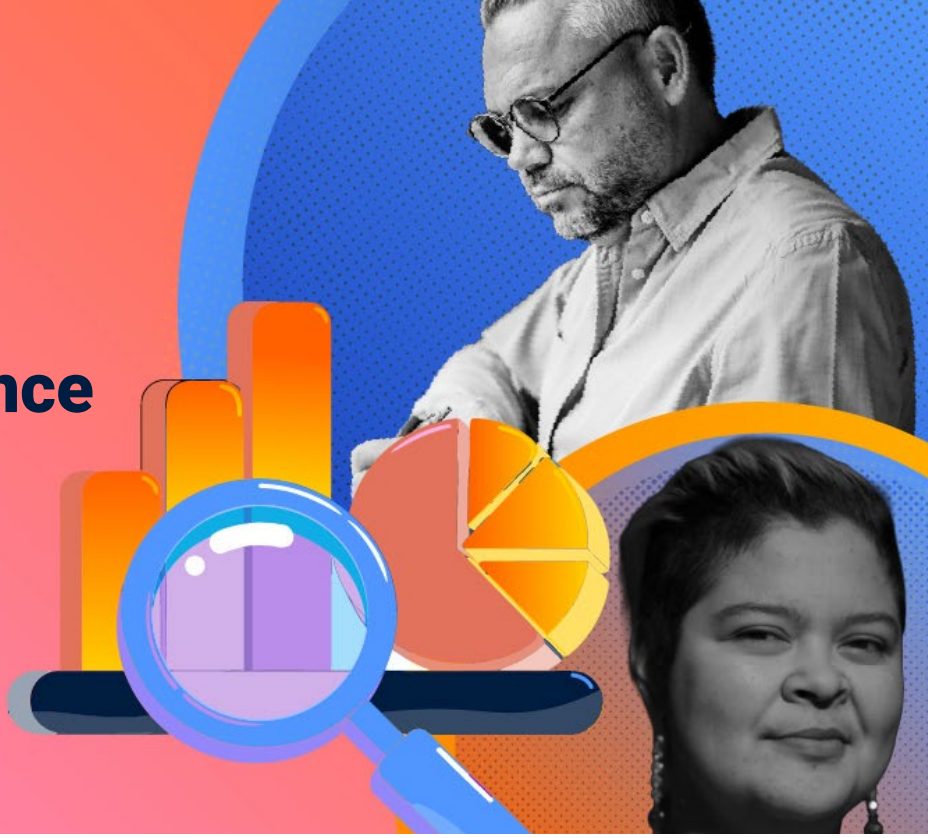
Figure 3: Policy inclusions for diversity and inclusion in the workplace



Percentage is of all employers.

GEI 2

Gender balance of governing bodies



Women remain significantly under-represented in the governing bodies that oversee Australia's workplaces. Although women make up half of the workforce, they hold just 34% of governing body positions and 22% of chair roles.

The gender imbalance of governing bodies is pronounced, reflecting ongoing stereotypes and biases that associate leadership with masculine traits. A man is almost 3.7 times more likely than a woman to be the chair of a governing body, and nearly 1 in 4 boards have no women on them.

Employer action in this area is important. Governing bodies set the standard and the direction for an organisation and influence the actions employers take to improve gender equality. Gender-balanced governing bodies are also associated with enhanced company performance (Chown et al. 2026). However, only 43% of employers have a policy or strategy to support and achieve gender equality on the governing body.

The persistent gender imbalance at the highest levels of leadership raises important questions about the diversity of perspectives informing organisational strategy, workplace decisions and accountability for gender equality.

Women hold just one third of governing body positions

Women's representation on governing bodies is an area for employer action and improvement.

Governing body members and chairs

Governing body positions remain unevenly distributed between women and men. A man is 2 times more likely than a woman to be on a governing body and almost 3.7 times more likely than a woman to be chair of a governing body. The proportion of women governing body members and chairs increased by 1pp each from 2024-25.

Figure 10: Gender composition of governing body members and chairs



Composition of governing bodies by industry

In almost all industries, women's representation on governing bodies falls below their overall representation in the workforce. Mining is the only exception, where women hold a greater share of governing body positions than their share of the industry workforce. However, women still account for less than 30% of both the Mining workforce and governing body members, and governing bodies in this industry are more likely to be men-dominated.

The largest gap is found in Health Care and Social Assistance. Despite being a strongly women-dominated industry, women are substantially less represented on governing bodies than in the workforce. This suggests that workforce representation alone does not guarantee equal access to positions of leadership and influence.

By contrast, women hold almost 55% of governing body positions among Commonwealth public sector employers, closely reflecting women's representation in the Commonwealth public sector workforce. This demonstrates that more balanced governance outcomes are achievable when representation is prioritised.

Figure 11: Share of women governing body members and chairs, by industry

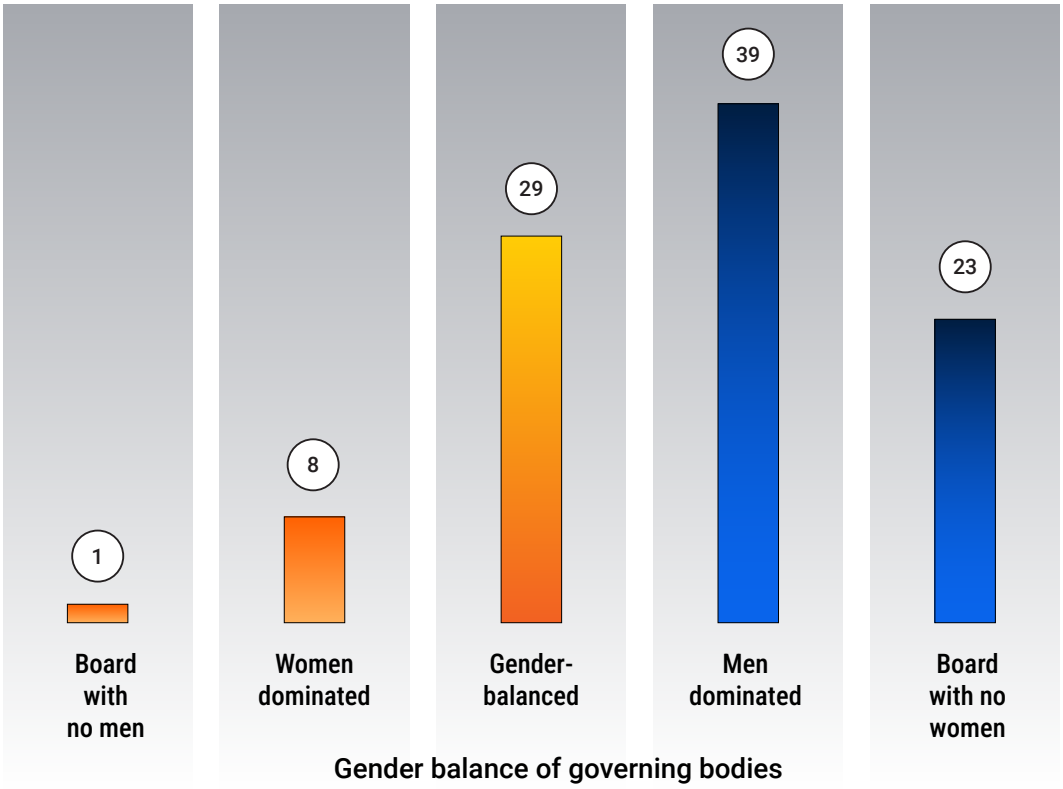


Gender-balanced governing bodies remain the exception

Most governing bodies are men-dominated, while almost 1 in 4 have no women members at all. These patterns have improved slightly from 2024-25, when 40% of governing bodies were men-dominated and 24% had no women members.

The continued prevalence of all-men and men-dominated governing bodies indicates that progress towards gender-balanced governance remains uneven. It also means many employers are missing opportunities to benefit from a broader range of perspectives on their governing bodies.

Figure 12: Gender balance of governing bodies



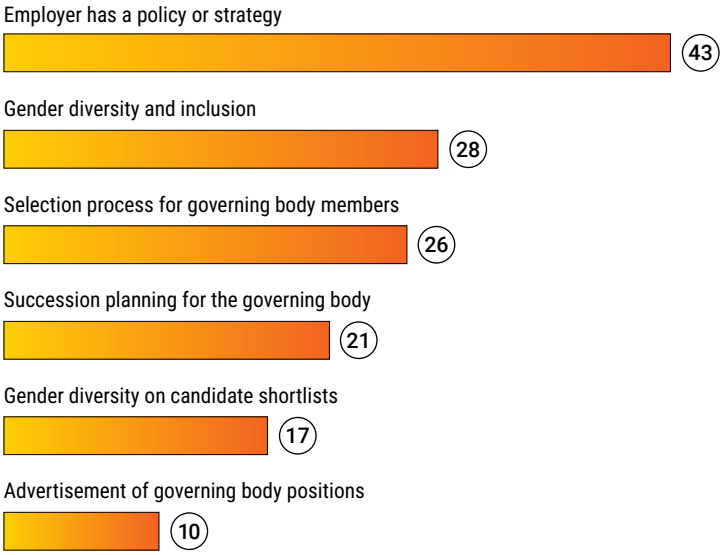
Employers have more work to do to embed gender equality in boardroom decisions

Achieving more balanced representation on governing bodies requires concerted action from employers. Policies and strategies can help organisations direct these efforts and provide guidance for enhancing gender balance and diversity on governing bodies.

Gender equality policies

Only 43% of employers have a policy or strategy related to gender equality on the governing body, a decrease of 1pp from 2024-25. A minority of employers have policy inclusions related to gender diversity of governing body appointments. This represents a key area of opportunity and change. Employers can address under-representation by purposefully considering gender diversity through selection and succession planning processes for governing body members.

Figure 13: Policy inclusions to support and achieve gender equality on the governing body

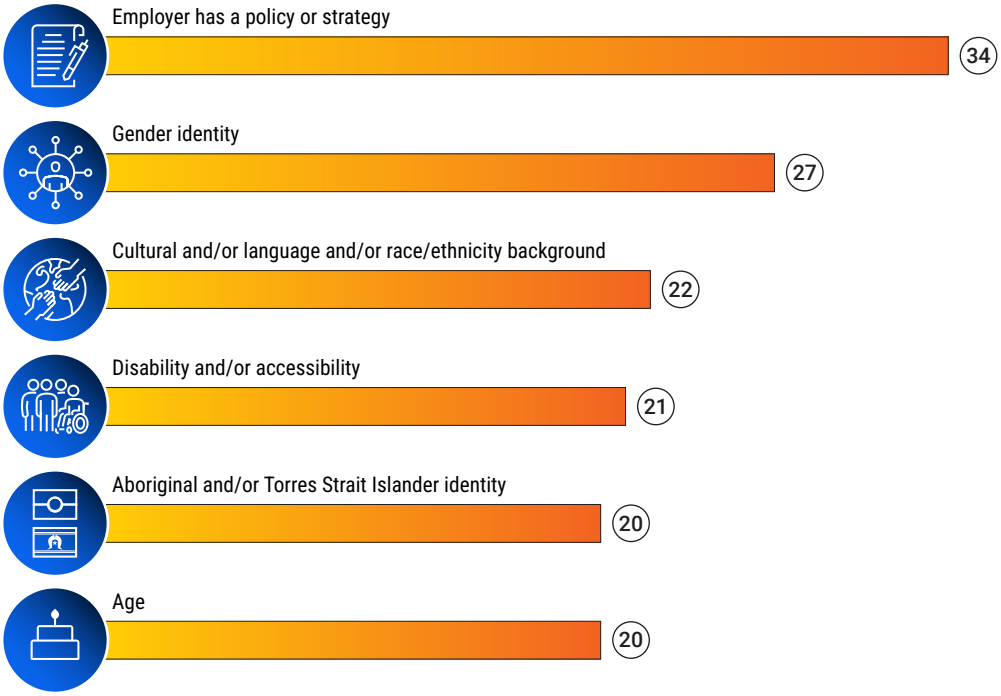


Percentage is of all employers.

Diversity and inclusion policies

Policies that support diversity and inclusion on governing bodies recognise the value of diverse perspectives in strengthening decision-making and governance. However, only 34% of employers have a policy or strategy related to diversity and inclusion on the governing body, unchanged from 2024-25.

Figure 14: Governing body diversity and inclusion policy inclusions



Percentage is of all employers.

GEI 3

Equal remuneration between women and men



This year, the gender pay gap in Australia is below 20% for the first time. The average total remuneration gender pay gap is 19.7% in 2026. The gender pay gap is a broad financial measure of the impact of differences in pay and gender composition in the workforce. It reflects the many barriers that women continue to face in Australian workplaces.

WGEA's dataset in 2026 combines the information reported by employers in the Commonwealth public sector and the private sector to form a more comprehensive picture of the national workforce. The gender pay gap has decreased this year due to lower gender pay gaps at Commonwealth public sector employers, as well as a reduced concentration of women in the lower pay quartile and stronger wage growth for women in large industries, such as Health Care and Social Assistance and Retail Trade, in the private sector. The decrease to the national gender pay gap can also be attributed to the increased overall proportion of women in full-time, management and leadership roles.

Women's access to high-paying roles is still limited. Although the proportion of women in the lower pay quartile has decreased by 1pp this year, there has been no change in the proportion of women in the upper pay quartile (36%). Men are still 1.8 times more likely to be in the top quartile of earners in the country. The gender pay gap remains the highest at CEO level, where it has increased by 1.4pp to 27.6% this year.

Addressing these persistent disparities requires employers to understand the specific factors driving pay inequality in their workforce and take action in response. However, analysis and action on the gender pay gap declined slightly in 2026. The proportion of employers conducting an analysis fell from 68% to 67%, while the proportion taking action in response to their findings decreased from 75% to 72%.

However, among employers that conducted a gender pay gap analysis, 28% completed a comprehensive analysis, an increase of 4pp. These analyses examine earnings, workforce composition, working arrangements and employee movements across all levels of the organisation, giving employers a more complete understanding of the factors contributing to their pay gaps and a stronger evidence base for targeted action.

Understanding the gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average or median earnings of women and the average or median earnings of men in the workforce. It is different from equal pay which is the legal requirement to pay employees the same for doing the same work or work of comparable value.

Australia has a persistent gender pay gap in favour of men. This is seen at industry and occupational levels and across the whole of the WGEA dataset, reflecting the different value placed on women's and men's contributions in the workforce.

The gender pay gap is indicative of the level of equality and inclusivity in the workforce. Its persistence reflects ongoing assumptions, norms and structures about women's and men's roles in society, which can influence and limit women's participation and progression at work and reduce earning capacity over their lifetime. This includes gender segregation by occupation and industry and women's under-representation in leadership and full-time employment.

The gender pay gap is also a result of women taking on the majority of unpaid care work, issues of safety and discrimination at work, and workplace flexibility. These factors can create a mismatch between employees' skills and the roles they occupy, which has consequences for individuals, workplaces, and the Australian economy.

When employers recognise, value, and make use of the skills and expertise of their full talent pool, they create more adaptable, more resilient, and more productive workplaces, strengthening the Australian economy in turn (see also Jobs and Skills Australia 2025a).

The gender pay gap is below 20%

The national picture

The average total remuneration gender pay gap is 19.7%. This means that, for every dollar earned by men, women earn 80 cents on average. Over a year, this adds up to a difference of $27,467.

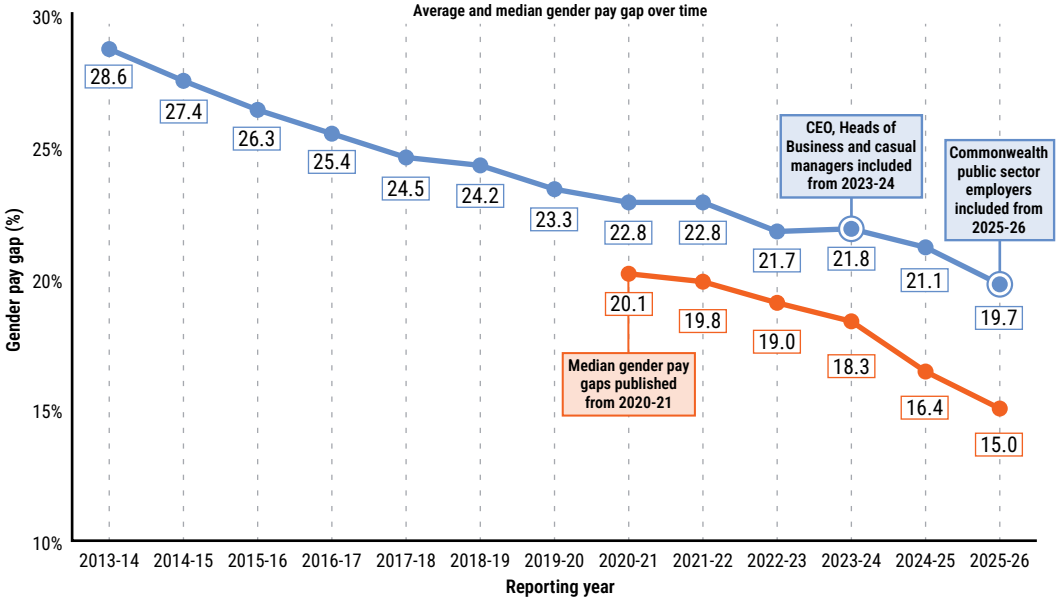
This is the first time that the average total remuneration gender pay gap has fallen below 20% since reporting to WGEA began. It is also the first time WGEA has published a national gender pay gap that includes both private sector and Commonwealth public sector employers.

The private sector gender pay gap declined by 0.8pp, from 21.1% in 2024-25 to 20.3% in 2026. Including Commonwealth public sector employers reduced the combined result by a further 0.6pp, to 19.7%.

The integration of private sector and Commonwealth public sector data follows the expansion of WGEA's dataset in 2023-24 to include the remuneration of CEOs, Heads of Business and casual managers. That earlier change increased the measured gender pay gap by 0.7pp.

Although these expansions to the dataset for calculating the gender pay gap cause fluctuations, they provide an increasingly comprehensive picture of gender inequality across the national workforce. The overall trend also remains clear: a considerable gender pay gap persists, but it is gradually narrowing.

Figure 15: Average and median total remuneration gender pay gap over time



Base salary and total remuneration gender pay gaps

The total remuneration gender pay gap is higher than the base salary gender pay gap. This is because total remuneration includes additional payments above base salary such as bonuses, overtime and superannuation. Men receive these discretionary payments and accumulate superannuation at higher rates than women due to men's disproportionate representation in higher paid roles.

The median gender pay gap reflects the difference in pay for women and men who are in the middle of the dataset, while the average gender pay gap takes into account the proportion of women and men who are very low or high earners. The median gender pay gap in 2026 is 15.0%. The median gender pay gap is lower than the average gender pay gap this year. This is mainly caused by the concentration of men in very highly paid roles.

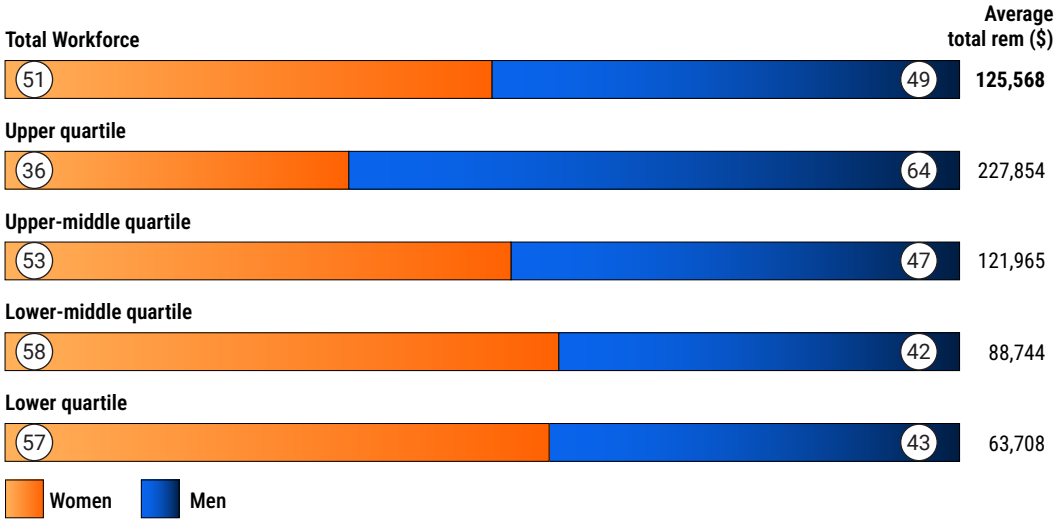
Figure 16: Gender pay gaps in base salary and total remuneration

	Base salary				Total remuneration			
	($)		GPG		($)		GPG	
	Women	Men	($)	(%)	Women	Men	($)	(%)
Average	93,855	109,436	15,581	14.2	112,210	139,677	27,467	19.7
Median	81,021	90,000	8,979	10.0	95,254	112,022	16,769	15.0

Gender composition by pay quartiles

Pay quartiles divide employees into 4 equal-sized groups from the lowest to highest earners. This emphasises the gender imbalance across the pay distribution and further shows that men are more likely to be in higher-paid roles. While the total workforce is gender-balanced, men are 1.8 times more likely to be in the upper pay quartile. Women are 1.3 times more likely to be in the lower quartile. Those in the upper quartiles earn 3.6 times more than those in the lower quartile, on average.

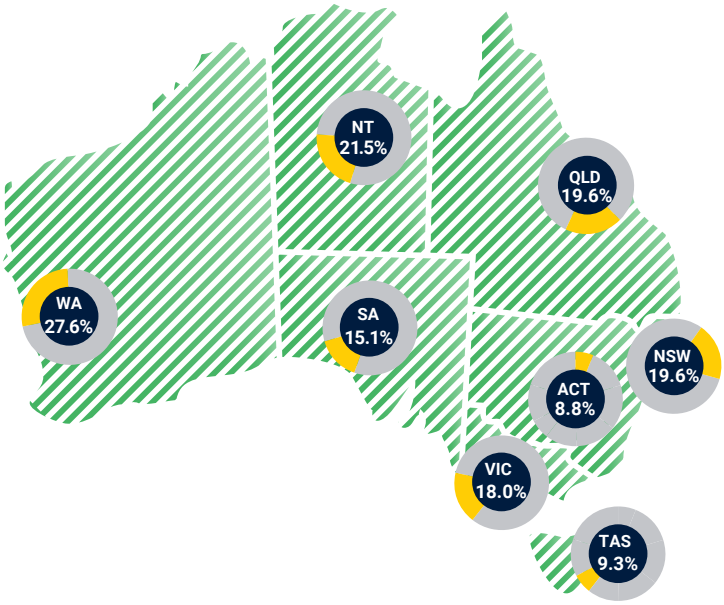
Figure 17: Gender composition and average total remuneration, by pay quartile



Gender pay gaps by state and territory

Every state and territory has a gender pay gap in favour of men, although the gap has narrowed across all jurisdictions since 2024-25. The substantial reduction observed in the Australian Capital Territory, from 16.6% to 8.8%, largely reflects the inclusion of Commonwealth public sector employers in this year's reporting population, rather than a comparable year-on-year improvement.

Figure 18: Average total remuneration gender pay gap, by primary work location



Gender pay gaps by industry

Every industry in Australia has a gender pay gap in favour of men. These gender pay gaps emerge because of the unequal representation of women and men in different roles, occupations, and pay ranges within each industry. Women are under-represented in the upper pay quartile in all industries relative to their overall industry workforce share. Similarly, women are over-represented in the lower pay quartile in all industries except Accommodation and Food Services and Public Administration and Safety.

Since this is the first year that WGEA's Scorecard combines the Commonwealth public sector and private sector data, the 2024-25 industry gender pay gap data has been recalculated to include both the Commonwealth public sector and private sector. This enables year-on-year comparison. Over the last year, the gender pay gap declined in 13 of 19 industries, remained the same in 1 industry, and increased in 5 industries.

Between 2024-25 and 2026, the average total remuneration gender pay gap for the private sector decreased from 21.1% to 20.3%. The pattern was less consistent in the Commonwealth public sector, where the average total remuneration gender pay gap increased from 7.4% to 7.8%, while the average base salary gender pay gap decreased from 4.2% to 3.9%. These contrasting trends may reflect changes between years in payments captured by total remuneration but not base salary, such as overtime, bonuses and lump sum payments. As the Commonwealth public sector cohort comprises only 126 employers, individual employers can also have a disproportionate impact on year-to-year results.

Figure 19: Gender pay gap in average total remuneration, by industry

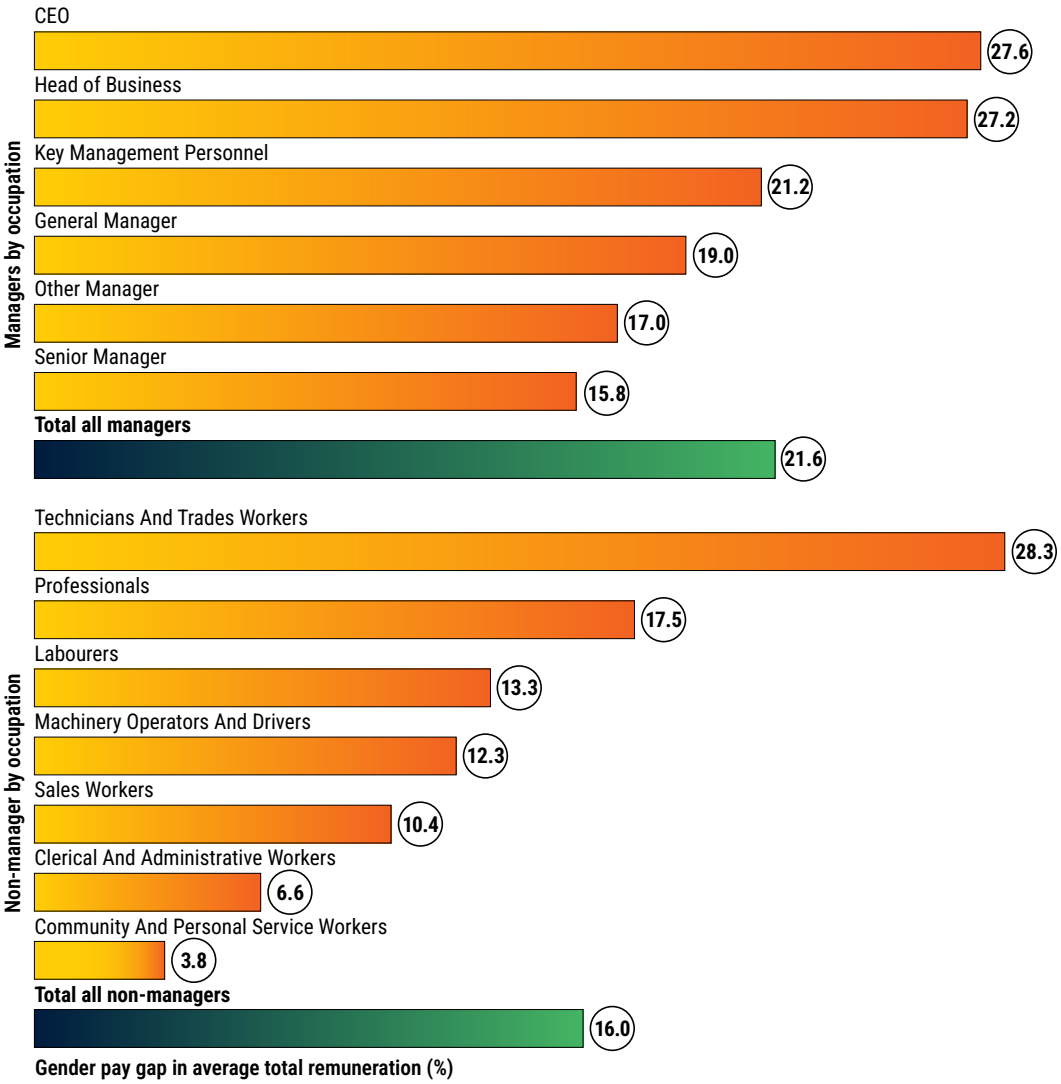
Industry	GPG in average total remuneration		Change from 2024-25 (pp)
	2024–25 (%)	2025–26 (%)	
Financial and Insurance Services	27.1	26.7	-0.4
Construction	23.7	22.8	-0.9
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	21.2	22.3	1.1
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	22.3	22.0	-0.3
Information Media and Telecommunications	18.6	17.3	-1.3
Other Services	19.2	17.0	-2.2
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	18.6	16.9	-1.7
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	16.5	16.8	0.3
Arts and Recreation Services	14.3	15.8	1.5
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	15.2	14.2	-1.0
Wholesale Trade	14.3	13.7	-0.6
Manufacturing	12.3	12.6	0.3
Mining	12.3	12.1	-0.2
Administrative and Support Services	9.9	11.5	1.6
Retail Trade	11.8	10.8	-1.0
Health Care and Social Assistance	11.3	10.2	-1.1
Education and Training	7.7	7.7	0.0
Accommodation and Food Services	4.5	3.9	-0.6
Public Administration and Safety	2.1	0.4	-1.7
Total private sector	**21.1**	**20.3**	**-0.8**
Total public sector	**7.4**	**7.8**	**0.4**
Total all industries	**20.4**	**19.7**	**-0.7**

Gender pay gaps by manager and non-manager occupation

The gender pay gap among managers generally widens with seniority and is largest at the CEO level. Women are also increasingly under-represented at more senior management levels.

Among non-manager occupations, Technicians and Trades Workers have the highest gender pay gap. This is a men-dominated occupation with a workforce composition of 82% men and 18% women. This gender imbalance has contributed to persistent skill shortages in this occupational category (see Jobs and Skills Australia 2025b).

Figure 20: Manager and non-manager occupation average total remuneration gender pay gaps



Conducting a gender pay gap analysis to inform employer actions and policies

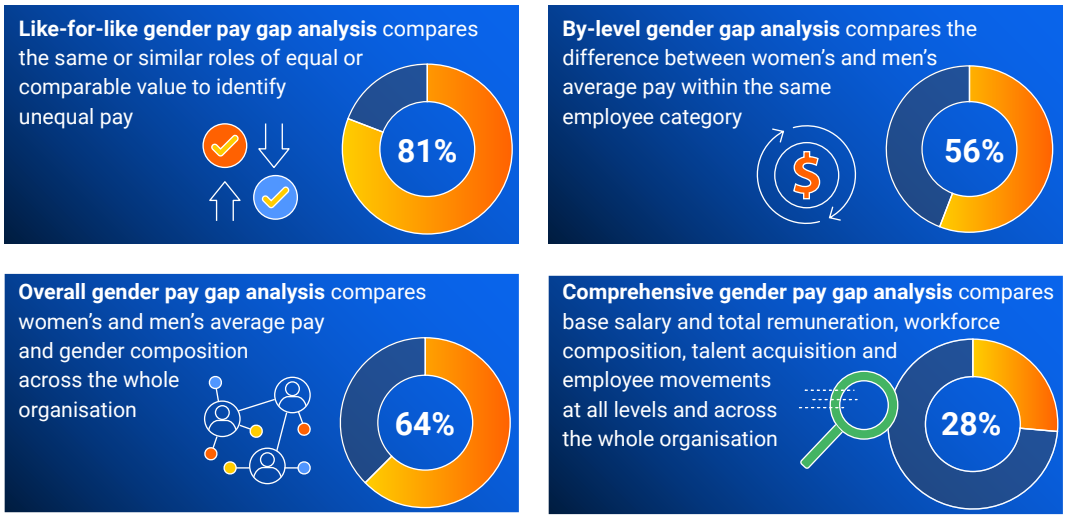
A gender pay gap analysis does more than identify differences in average earnings between women and men. It enables employers to understand what is driving those differences, from workforce composition and occupational segregation to recruitment, promotion and remuneration practices. This analysis provides the foundation for targeted action to address underlying causes of inequality and close gender pay gaps.

Employers conducting gender pay gap analysis

67% of employers conducted a gender pay gap analysis in 2026. 82% of employers who conducted a gender pay gap analysis reported doing so within the last 12 months. Conducting a gender pay gap analysis is the first step in understanding where gender inequality exists in an organisation.

More employers have conducted a comprehensive gender pay gap analysis this year when compared to last year. Of employers who conducted any kind of gender pay gap analysis, 28% conducted a comprehensive gender pay gap analysis. This is the most detailed gender pay gap analysis and the results can support employers in creating targeted actions to address gender inequality in their workplaces.

Figure 21: Employers who conducted a gender pay gap analysis, by type of analysis

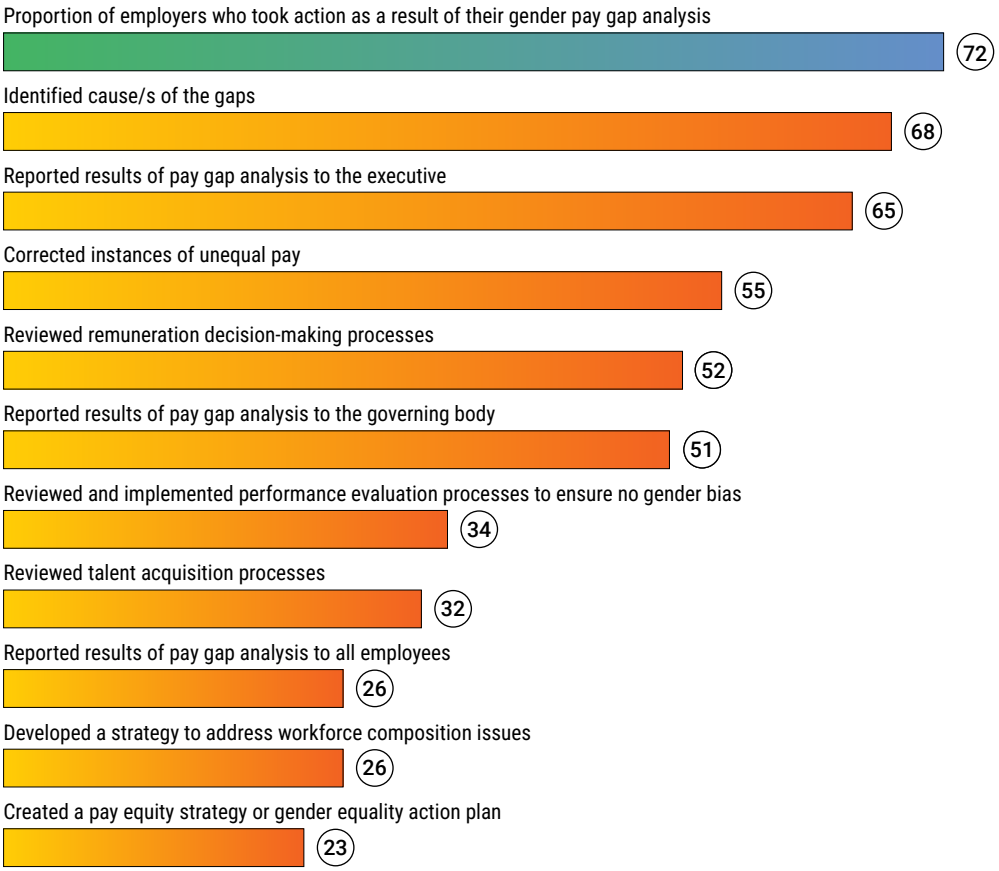


Percentage is of employers who conducted a gender pay gap analysis.

Action taken by employers following a gender pay gap analysis

72% of employers who conducted a gender pay gap analysis took action on the results. While this is an encouraging indicator of employer commitment to closing the gender pay gap, employers are under-utilising actions that more directly link to engaging with employees, including those that address performance evaluation processes, talent acquisition processes, and workforce composition.

Figure 22: Action taken by employers following a gender pay gap analysis

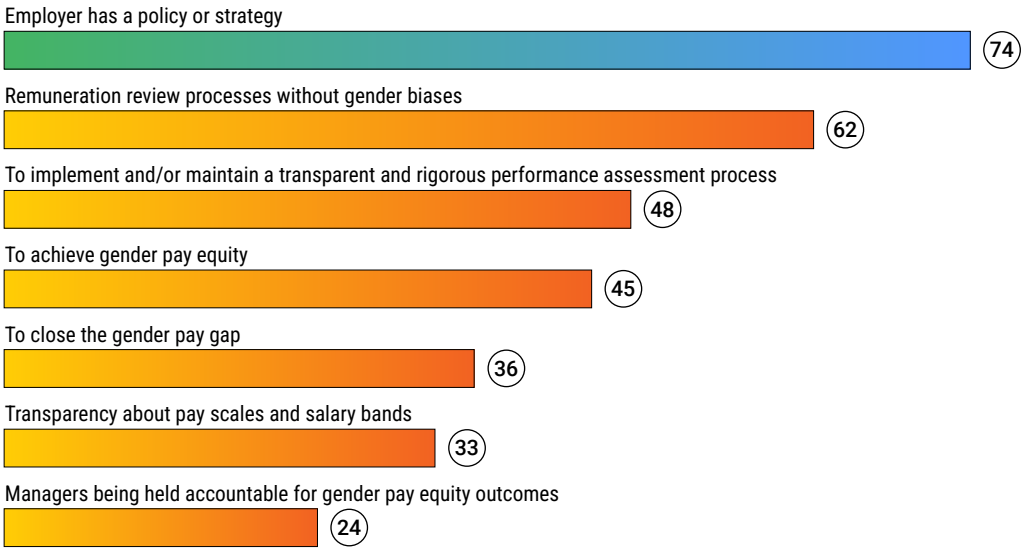


Percentage is of employers who conducted a gender pay gap analysis and took action as a result.

Employer policies to reduce the gender pay gap

While most employers have a policy or strategy that addresses the gender pay gap, only 36% of employers include the aspiration to close the gender pay gap.

Figure 23: Equal remuneration policy inclusions



Percentage is of all employers.

GEI 4

Flexible working arrangements, parental leave and support for carers



In Australia, the work patterns of women and men continue to be influenced by gender norms and stereotypes about responsibilities for unpaid care and other commitments. 44% of women work in full-time roles compared to 67% of men, which likely reflects traditional gender roles that see women take on the majority of unpaid care work and men spend more time in paid work.

The unequal division of unpaid care contributes to gender inequality in the workplace as women are more likely to take time away from, or reduce their participation in, the workforce. In 2026, women accounted for 79% of primary carer's leave taken. 21% of primary carer's leave was taken by men, a 1pp improvement from 2024-25.

Women's disproportionate share of these responsibilities can act as a handbrake on their workforce participation and career progression, negatively impacting their economic security in the long term (Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2024).

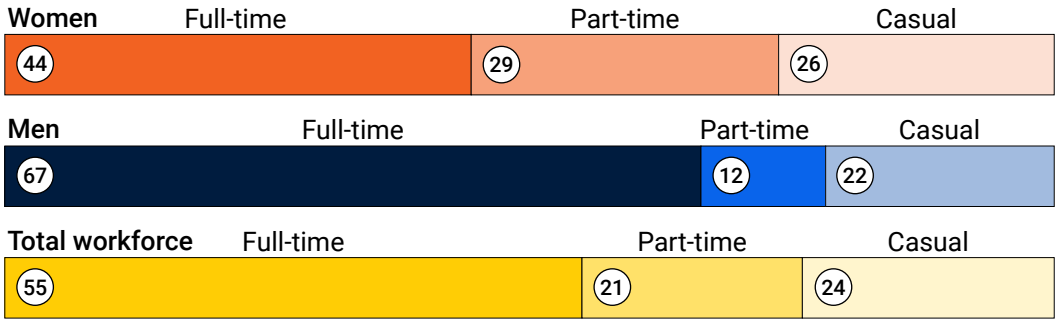
Efforts to promote equal workforce participation are strengthened when employers offer work arrangements, conditions and leave that support all employees to manage work with other responsibilities. This year, nearly 9 in 10 employers have a policy or strategy for flexible work arrangements, two thirds offer parental leave, and most provide a range of supports for carers.

By providing and normalising the use of flexible working arrangements, parental leave, and other supports for all employees, employers can support a more equal division of paid and unpaid responsibilities among women and men, which can enable more equal workforce participation and progression.

Women are more likely to work part-time, reflecting gender norms about paid and unpaid work

Women and men have different work patterns. Women are more likely to be employed part-time or casually, while men are more likely to be employed full-time.

Figure 24: Employment status, by gender (%)

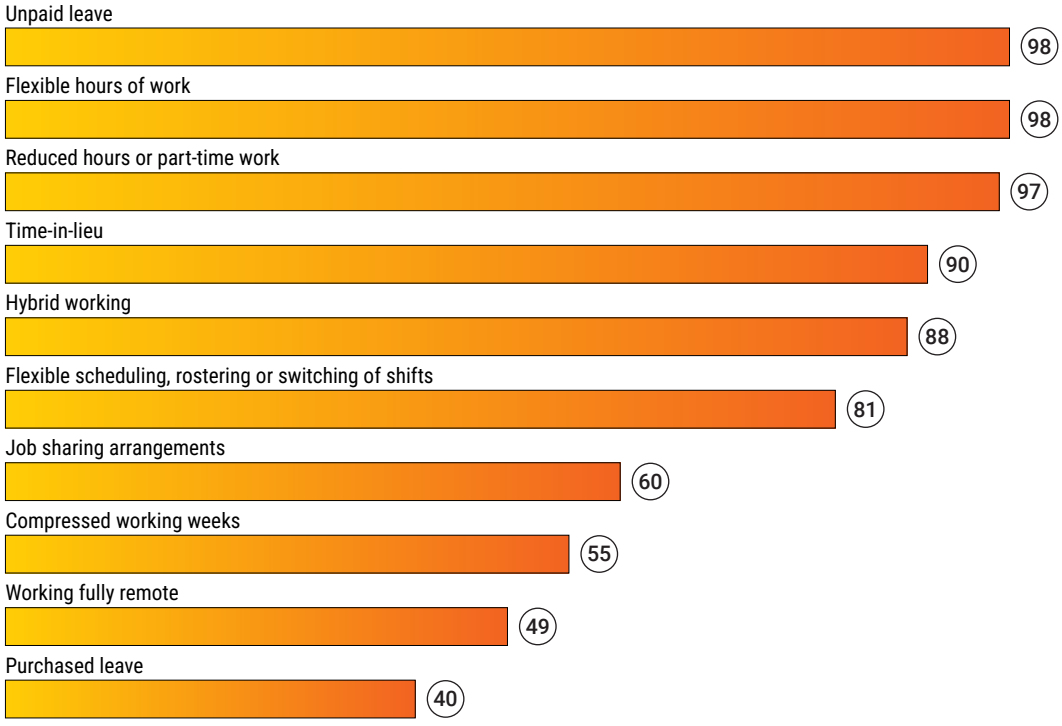


Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

In 2025–26, almost all employers offered unpaid leave and flexible hours of work, and at least 4 out of 5 employers offered flexible scheduling, rostering or switching of shifts, hybrid working, and time-in-lieu.

While almost all employers also offered part-time work or reduced hours, only 7% of manager roles were reported to be worked part-time. This highlights a significant gap between the widespread availability of part-time work policies and their use in management roles, raising questions about whether these roles are designed and supported to make part-time work a genuine option.

Figure 25: Types of flexible working arrangements offered by employers



Percentage is of all employers.

Given that women are more likely than men to work part-time and are under-represented in management roles, employers can support women's progression by designing more management roles that can be performed part-time. This can help reduce barriers to career progression for employees with caring responsibilities and challenge assumptions that effective leadership requires full-time work. However, only 13% of employers report that their flexible working arrangements policy or strategy includes the design of management roles that can be performed on a part-time basis.

Figure 26: Flexible working arrangements policy or strategy inclusions

Flexible work policy/strategy inclusions	Proportion of employers (%)
Employer has a policy or strategy	89
Flexible working is promoted throughout the organisation	65
Leaders are visible role models of flexible working	64
A business case for flexibility has been established and endorsed at the leadership level	57
All team meetings are offered online	45
All employees are surveyed on whether they have sufficient flexibility	40
Flexible work arrangements are available to all employees, with a default bias towards approval (all roles flex approach)	40
Training on flexible working and remote/hybrid teams is provided to managers	27
The impact of flexibility is measured and evaluated (e.g. reduced absenteeism, increased employee engagement)	26
Leaders are held accountable for increasing take up and approval of workplace flexibility	23
The organisation's approach to flexibility is integrated into client conversations	21
Training on flexible working and remote/hybrid teams is available to all employees	21
Reduced hours with full-time pay (e.g. Full time pay but work 4-day week or 9-day fortnight)	19
Metrics on the use of, and the impact of, flexibility measures are reported to key management personnel	19
Management positions are designed to be able to be done part-time	13
Metrics on the use of, and the impact of, flexibility measures are reported to the governing body	13
The ability to job-share is incorporated into job design and advertising of new roles	12
Targets have been set for engagement in flexible work	5
Targets have been set for men's engagement in flexible work	2

Percentage is of all employers.

More women take primary carer's leave

More women take primary carer's parental leave than men. 21% of all employees who took primary carer's parental leave in 2026 were men. This includes employees on government-funded, employer-funded, and unpaid parental leave.

While some industries with a higher proportion of men (such as Construction, Mining and Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services) also have a higher proportion of men taking primary carer's parental leave, this is not the case for all men-dominated industries.

Figure 27: Primary carer and universal parental leave taken by men

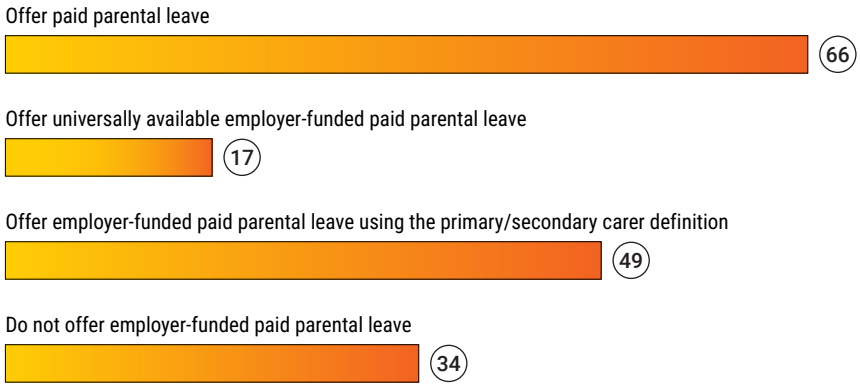
Industry	IGC	Men in industry (%)	Leave taken by men (%)
Mining		77	54
Information Media and Telecommunications		58	43
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services		72	41
Construction		79	39
Financial and Insurance Services		48	34
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services		56	33
Manufacturing		72	31
Transport, Postal and Warehousing		72	27
Arts and Recreation Services		48	25
Wholesale Trade		62	24
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services		60	21
Public Administration and Safety		49	15
Administrative and Support Services		53	13
Other Services		49	10
Accommodation and Food Services		48	10
Retail Trade		44	8
Education and Training		34	7
Health Care and Social Assistance		22	6
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		64	4
Total private sector		**49**	**21**
Total public sector		**46**	**18**
Total all industries		**49**	**21**

IGC: Industry gender composition Women-dominated | Gender-balanced | Men-dominated

Parental leave availability

One third of employers do not offer employer-funded paid parental leave. Almost half of employers offer this leave using a distinction between primary and secondary carers. Employers who remove this distinction from their paid leave offerings encourage a gender-equitable uptake of paid parental leave by signalling their recognition of the equally valuable role parents of all genders play in caring for children (WGEA 2024). At least 4 in 5 employers pay employer-funded paid parental leave at the level of the employee's full salary, regardless of whether or not they distinguish between primary and secondary carers.

Figure 28: Proportion of employers offering employer-funded paid parental leave



Percentage is of all employers.

Employers in the Financial and Insurance Services, Information Media and Telecommunications, and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services industries are most likely to offer universally available employer-funded paid parental leave without distinguishing between primary and secondary carers. Almost all (98%) Commonwealth public sector employers offer employer-funded paid parental leave, but are less likely than private sector employers to make this leave universally available to all staff.

Figure 29: Employers offering paid employer-funded parental leave, by industry

Industry	IGC	Universally available (%)	Primary/ secondary carer (%)	Offers parental leave (%)
Financial and Insurance Services		30	59	89
Education and Training		18	70	88
Information Media and Telecommunications		32	56	87
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services		26	61	87
Mining		12	73	85
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services		19	60	79
Arts and Recreation Services		21	57	78
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services		19	53	72
Public Administration and Safety		10	60	70
Health Care and Social Assistance		18	47	65
Other Services		20	46	65
Transport, Postal and Warehousing		9	54	64
Wholesale Trade		18	43	61
Construction		11	49	60
Manufacturing		15	41	56
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing		7	42	49
Retail Trade		12	35	47
Administrative and Support Services		13	32	45
Accommodation and Food Services		11	24	35
Total private sector		**17**	**48**	**66**
Total public sector		**11**	**87**	**98**
Total all industries		**17**	**49**	**66**

IGC: **Industry gender composition** Women-dominated Gender-balanced Men-dominated

Parental leave entitlements

Employers are more likely to distinguish between primary and secondary carers when offering employer-funded parental leave than they are to offer universally available leave. The most common period offered for both of these types of leave is between 7 and 12 weeks; promisingly, however, one quarter of employers offering each of these types of leave provide 18 or more weeks.

Figure 30: Maximum leave offered by paid parental leave type

Weeks of leave	Universally available and primary carer (%)	Universally available (%)	Primary carer (%)	Secondary carer (%)
1–6	12	15	10	89
7–12	37	32	38	7
13–17	27	27	26	3
18+	25	25	25	1
Average number of weeks	**13.9**	**13.7**	**13.9**	**3.7**

Rows show maximum leave entitlements (in weeks) offered by employers, grouped into 4 categories. Columns show the proportion of all employers offering each maximum leave duration across parental leave types.

Paying superannuation on parental leave indicates to employees that parental leave is just like any other workplace entitlement, and that taking time to care for children is a normal element of all parents' working lives (Australian Government Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet 2024).

On average, women spend more time out of the workforce to care for children. Coupled with lower average remuneration, this means women are likely to retire with substantially lower superannuation balances than men. Superannuation paid on employer-funded parental leave can have a real impact on women's immediate and future financial security. Most employers who offer employer-funded leave pay superannuation on this leave.

Figure 31: Proportion of employers paying superannuation on employer-funded parental leave

	Universally available and primary carer (%)	Universally available (%)	Primary carer (%)	Secondary carer (%)
Employer-funded	87	88	87	88
Government-funded	19	22	18	17
Unpaid	16	20	15	11
No superannuation	11	10	12	11

Totals do not add to 100% because employers may pay superannuation on more than one type of leave.

Parental leave terms and conditions

Most employers place a qualifying period and time limits on access to employer-funded parental leave. These arrangements determine when employees become eligible for leave and may affect decisions about job mobility during key caregiving years. Employers can support employees with different caregiving needs by providing flexibility in how and when parental leave is taken while also ensuring eligibility requirements are clear and consistently applied. Parental leave arrangements can encourage more equal sharing of care between men and women by supporting both parents to take an active role in caring, rather than reinforcing traditional assumptions about primary and secondary carers.

Figure 32: Proportion of employers with qualifying periods and time limits on employer-funded parental leave

	Universally available and primary carer (%)	Universally available (%)	Primary carer (%)	Secondary carer (%)
Qualifying period	**86**	**82**	**88**	**85**
Average qualifying period (months)	**12.0**	**11.6**	**12.1**	**11.6**
Time limits	93	90	94	95
Within 24 months	20	26	18	19
Within 12 months	50	49	50	52
Within 6 months	14	11	15	13
Other	9	4	10	12
No limit	7	11	6	5

Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Support for carers varies across employers

While most employers offer access to counselling and external support for carers, the proportion of employers offering other supports are much smaller in comparison. There are a number of meaningful supports that can enhance carers' connection to the workplace and enable them to reconcile paid work with unpaid caring responsibilities, contributing to employee wellbeing and workforce retention during this time of significant change.

Figure 33: Support offered to carers

Support for carers	Proportion of employers (%)
Access to counselling and external support for carers	93
Keep-in-touch programs for carers on extended leave and/or parental leave	64
Breastfeeding facilities	62
Referral services to support employees with family and/or caring responsibilities	52
Coaching for employees returning to work from parental leave and/or extended carers leave and/or career breaks	41
Targeted communication mechanisms	37
Internal support networks for parents and/or carers	29
Information packs for those with family and/or caring responsibilities	24
Referral services for care facilities	8
Support for employees with securing care	6
Parenting workshop	6
On-site childcare	5
Return to work bonus	4
Employer subsidised childcare	4

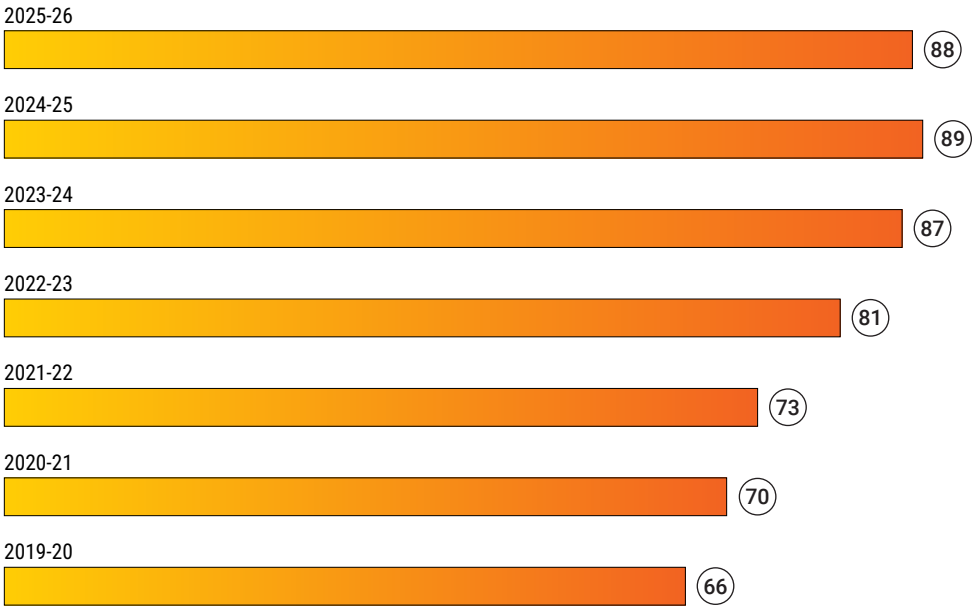
Percentage is of all employers.

Support for employees experiencing family and domestic violence remains, but progress has stalled

Employers who have supports in place for employees experiencing family and domestic violence can help these employees feel connected and safe in the workplace. This in turn supports their economic security and capacity to recover from violence.

The years from 2019-20 to 2023-24 saw a sustained increase in the proportion of employers with policies or strategies in place to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence. However, progress has stalled in the last 2 years, with 88% of employers in 2026 having a policy or strategy in place.

Figure 34: Proportion of employers with a formal policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence



Percentage is of all employers.

At a minimum, employers are now required to provide 10 days of paid family and domestic violence leave under the National Employment Standards. Employers can choose to strengthen the support available for employees through additional inclusions, outlined in Figure 35.

There has been a notable reduction in the proportion of employers providing referral to appropriate domestic violence support services. 62% of employers reported having this in place in 2025–26, down 6pp from 2024-25.

Workplaces can be an important source of support and connection for employees experiencing violence. Employers need the capability to recognise and respond appropriately to disclosures, provide a safe and supportive workplace response and facilitate access to specialist services where needed. Employers should refer employees experiencing violence to external specialist supports to ensure these employees receive safe and appropriate responses from services equipped to provide them. External referrals should complement, not replace, an employer's own responsibility to support employees experiencing family and domestic violence.

Figure 35: Supports offered to employees experiencing family or domestic violence

Supports offered to employees experiencing family or domestic violence	Proportion of employers (%)
Paid domestic violence leave	98
Confidentiality of matters disclosed	97
Employee assistance program (including access to psychologist, chaplain or counsellor)	95
Flexible working arrangements	94
Protection from any adverse action or discrimination based on the disclosure of domestic violence	88
Unpaid domestic violence leave	88
Referral of employees to appropriate domestic violence support services for expert advice	62
Offer change to office location	60
Workplace safety planning	59
A domestic violence clause is in an enterprise agreement or workplace agreement	49
Provision of financial support (e.g. advance bonus payment or advanced pay)	44
Training of key personnel	43
Access to medical services (e.g. doctor or nurse)	31
Emergency accommodation assistance	21

Percentage is of all employers.

GEI 5
Employee consultation



Employer progress on consulting employees about gender equality has stalled over the last year. Following a period of steady increases, the same proportion of employers consulted employees about gender equality (73%) and there was only a 1pp increase to 61% in the proportion of employers with a policy or strategy for consulting employees about gender equality between 2024-25 and 2026.

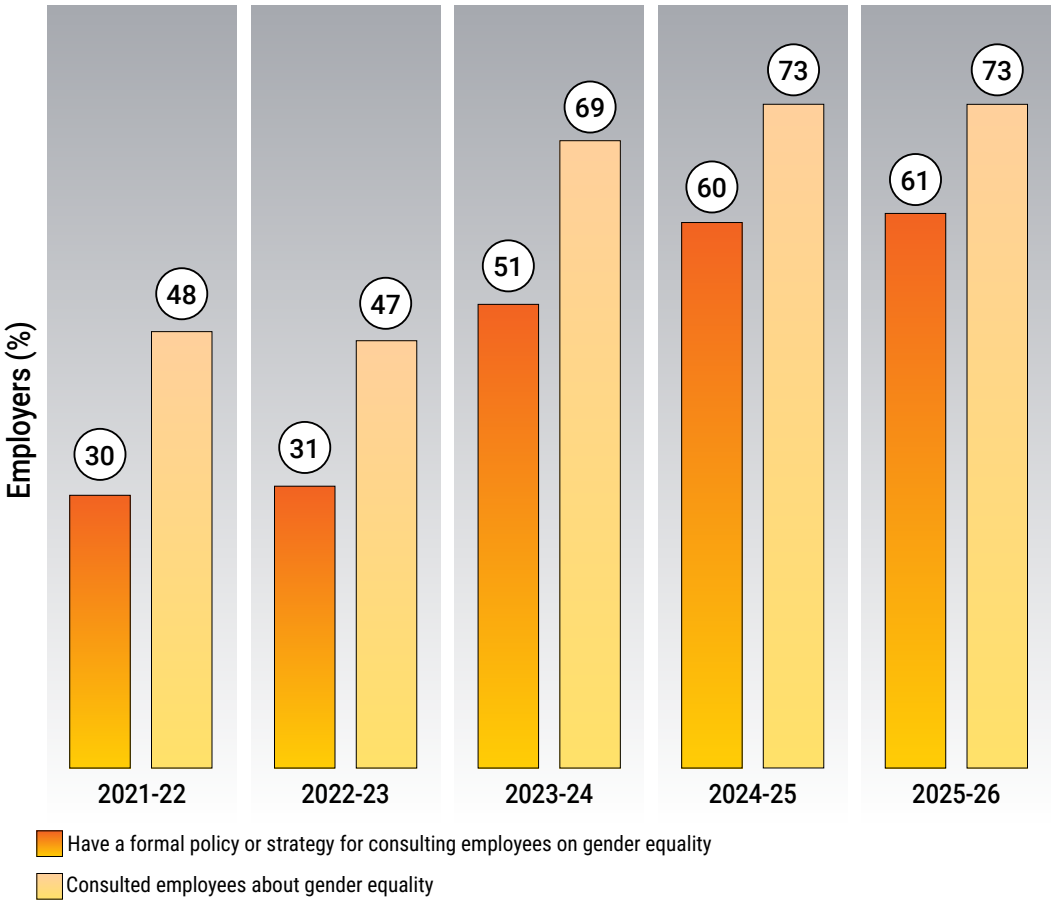
Consultation with employees is an opportunity for employers to understand employees' experiences of gender equality at work. This is why the method of consultation also matters. Open-ended methods can generate richer insights about employee experiences. Yet, fewer employers show a preference for more open-ended and conversational methods. 40% of employers consulted through consultative committees or groups (down 2pp from 2024-25) and 29% consulted through focus groups (down 4pp from 2024-25). Instead, most employers (72%) indicate using employee experience surveys to consult employees.

Meaningful employee consultation provides a space for employers to listen to employees and gain additional context and insight into their workplace gender equality data. This can help to generate effective solutions and inform employer actions that enhance gender equality at work.

Employer progress on consulting employees about gender equality has stalled

Almost three quarters of employers report consulting employees about gender equality in 2026, which is the same proportion as 2024-25. Only 61% of employers have a formal policy or strategy on consultation, an increase of 1pp from 2024-25. This is an area that would benefit from continued growth and employer effort in order to enhance workplace gender equality outcomes.

Figure 36: Policies and employer action to consult employees on gender equality



Methods of employee consultation

The most widely used methods of consultation are employee experience surveys and exit interviews. These are important options for consultation, but they should not be the main or only forms of consultation. This is because survey responses often provide information about what is happening as opposed to why it is happening, and waiting until an employee exits an organisation to consult about gender equality risks delaying a necessary response to a gender equality issue.

The proportions of employers consulting through consultative committees or groups and through focus groups have declined between 2024-25 and 2026.

Commonwealth public sector employers also report consulting employees through the APS Census. This method of consultation was used by a majority of Commonwealth public sector employers in 2026.

Examples of other methods of consultation reported by employers include team meetings, one-on-one meetings, enterprise bargaining processes and opportunities for employees to comment on organisational policies.

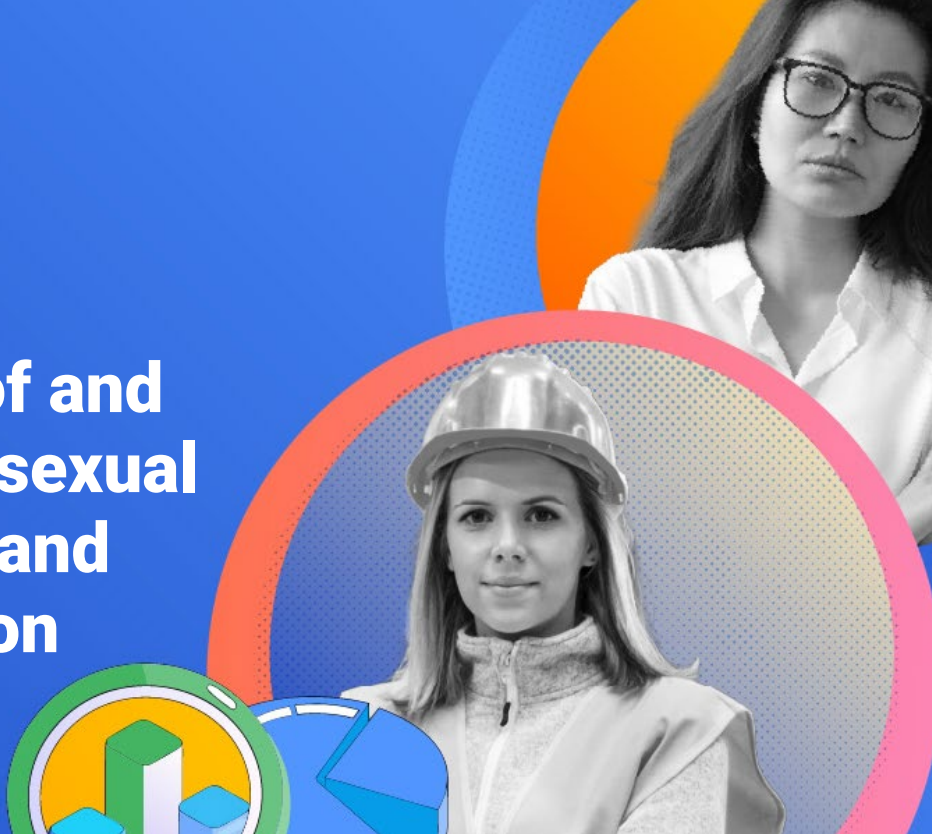
Figure 37: Method of employer consultation on gender equality

Method of consultation	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
Employee experience survey	69	71	72
Exit interviews	62	64	64
Performance discussions	40	41	41
Consultative committee or group	43	42	40
Focus groups	31	29	25
Other	29	20	17

Percentage is of employers who consulted employees. Employers could select more than one option.

GEI 6

Prevention of and response to sexual harassment and discrimination



Sexual harassment in the workplace is a gender equality issue, with gender inequality an underlying cause (AHRC 2023a). Women are more likely than men to have experienced workplace sexual harassment, and the rate of incidence is higher for particular groups of workers and women, including young people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and people with disability (AHRC 2022).

Employers have a legal obligation to prevent, as far as possible, sexual harassment and other unlawful behaviours in the workplace.

Significant work has been undertaken by employers to move the dial on setting clear expectations around safety at work, with 99.3% of employers having a policy or strategy in place for sexual harassment prevention and response.

However, preventing sexual harassment and discrimination requires more than policies and procedures alone. It requires visible leadership, proactive identification and management of risks, and clear accountability for creating safe and respectful workplaces.

This year's data highlights how employers are moving beyond policy commitment to putting these responsibilities into practice.

The 2026 dataset shows incremental progress in the proportion of employers collecting data on sexual harassment (up 2pp to 77% from 2024-25), incorporating industry- and workplace-specific risks into their risk management processes (up 2pp to 73%), and reporting information on sexual harassment to the CEO (up 2pp to 93%) and governing body (up 3pp to 79%). These increases are small, but they matter. They demonstrate that employers understand there is more work to do to ensure that all employees feel safe and can access supports if they need them.

In other areas, progress has slowed or stalled, and there is scope for renewed commitment to action.

The following data for GEI 6 is grouped by each of the 7 standards outlined in the Australian Human Rights Commission's Guidelines for complying with the positive duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth). The standards are interrelated and the data should be considered holistically to inform employers' continuing prevention and response efforts.

Leadership accountability is critical to preventing sexual harassment

Senior leaders, including governing bodies, are responsible for taking proactive action to prevent workplace sexual harassment, and leadership has a 'fundamental' function in implementing the remaining standards in the AHRC's guidelines (AHRC 2023b).

89% of employers included leadership accountabilities and responsibilities for prevention and response to sexual harassment in their policy or strategy. While 86% of employers reported that their CEO is accountable for reviewing the organisation's sexual harassment and discrimination prevention policy, only 59% of employers reported that this is the case for their governing body. There is a clear opportunity here for governing bodies to increase their engagement with this element of the prevention infrastructure. While capturing leadership accountabilities in a policy is the first step, visible leadership requires committed action.

Figure 38: Accountability for review of sexual harassment and discrimination prevention policy



CEOs are setting expectations for respectful workplace culture

91% of employers report that their CEO communicates their expectations on safety and respectful and inclusive workplace conduct. However, only one third report that the CEO communicates these expectations more often than annually.

Formal communications like leadership statements contribute to workplace culture alongside more informal mechanisms like attitudes towards workplace flexibility, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and accepted modes of interaction (AHRC 2023c). By making communications more frequent and embedding prevention messages into regular updates, leaders can demonstrate their commitment to building and reinforcing a positive and safe workplace culture.

Figure 39: Timing of CEO communications

Timing of CEO communications	Proportion of employers (%)
CEO communicates expectations	91
At staff inductions	53
Ahead of big events (e.g. functions, conferences) or at internal launches (e.g. at the launch of a new strategy)	44
More often than annually	33
Annually	26
When staff are promoted	7

Percentage is of all employers. Employers could provide multiple responses.

Governing body oversight remains an area for improvement

The data on communications by leaders again shows a notable gap between CEO and governing body engagement: only 59% of governing bodies explicitly communicate their expectations on safety and respectful and inclusive workplace conduct (compared to 91% of CEOs). Only 19% of employers report that the governing body communicates these expectations more often than annually.

Like CEOs and other senior leaders, boards have a crucial role to play in preventing sexual harassment by setting clear expectations for safe and respectful workplace behaviour, and ensuring these expectations are reflected in workplace culture and communications.

Figure 40: Timing of governing body communications

Timing of governing body communications	Proportion of employers (%)
Governing body communicates expectations	59
New staff at induction	31
Annually	20
More often than annually	19

Percentage is of all employers. Employers could provide multiple responses.

Employers need to do better at building knowledge to prevent harm

Just as almost all employers have a policy or strategy in place to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, most employers (91%) also report providing training on sexual harassment prevention. For training to be effective, employers need to see it as more than a compliance requirement and recognise that employees, managers and governing body members will benefit more from ongoing opportunities for education than they do from one-off training sessions (AHRC 2023b).

However, most employers offer this training to employees either annually or at induction. In 2026, only 1 in 10 employers reported providing sexual harassment prevention training to managers multiple times a year. Even fewer reported providing this training multiple times to non-managers (9%) and the governing body (5%).

Here there is again scope for employers to strengthen active governing body involvement with sexual harassment prevention measures. Fewer than half of employers report governing body members receive training on induction, and less than 4 in 10 employers report that they receive it annually.

Figure 41: Timing of sexual harassment prevention training

Timing of sexual harassment prevention training (%)	At induction	At promotion	Annually	Multiple times a year	Total
All Managers	81	10	65	10	90
All Non-Managers	80	6	62	9	90
The Governing Body	48	–	39	5	61

Percentage is of all employers. Employers could provide multiple responses.

Employers are taking steps to identify and manage sexual harassment risks

Like all workplace risks, the risks presented by sexual harassment need to be proactively managed. While the majority of employers have a risk management process in place to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, 1 in 6 employers do not, representing an area for further progress.

Encouragingly, of employers who do have a risk management process in place, 87% include identification and assessment of specific workplace and industry risks in this process. This could indicate a well-developed understanding of the drivers and risk factors underlying sexual harassment, and who it affects (AHRC 2023b). It shows that a high proportion of employers are taking more active and specific steps to embed prevention in their organisation and its operations.

While 73% of all employers include control measures to eliminate or minimise the identified drivers and risks in their risk management process, only 62% include a regular review of these measures' effectiveness. Alongside identifying risks and implementing control measures, regular review of control measures is part of a proactive, risk-based approach to managing sexual harassment in the workplace (AHRC 2023b).

Finally, while 73% of employers report consulting employees on gender equality broadly, only 51% consult specifically on sexual harassment risks and mitigation.

Figure 42: Inclusions in risk management process to prevent and respond to sexual harassment

Inclusions in risk management process to prevent and respond to sexual harassment	Proportion of employers (%)
Employer has a risk management process in place	84
Control measures to eliminate or minimise the identified drivers and risks for sexual harassment so far as reasonably practicable	73
Identification and assessment of the specific workplace and industry risks of sexual harassment	73
Reporting to leadership on workplace sexual harassment risks, prevention and response, incident management effectiveness and outcomes, trend analysis and actions	68
Regular review of the effectiveness of control measures to eliminate or minimise the risks of sexual harassment	62
Consultation on sexual harassment risks and mitigation with staff and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. people you share premises with)	51
Identification, assessment and control measures in place to manage the risk of vicarious trauma to responding staff	46

Percentage is of all employers.

In contrast to the high proportion of employers who have a risk management process in place, relatively low levels of employers are taking the risk management actions outlined in Figure 43 below. This includes just 36% of employers undertaking a culture audit and only 30% of employers training identified contact officers.

Figure 43: Employer risk management actions in relation to sexual harassment

Employer risk management actions in relation to sexual harassment	2024-25	2025-26	Change from 2024-25 (pp)
Train people managers in prevention of sexual harassment	71	72	1
Train staff on mitigation and control measures	52	54	2
Make workplace adjustments	49	52	3
Change or develop new control measures	47	48	1
Undertake and act on a culture audit of the relevant business or division	36	36	0
Train identified contact officers	31	30	-1
Implement other changes	7	6	-1
None of the above	2	2	0

Percentage is of all employers.

Support for affected employees must be accessible and person-centred

Support frameworks built on person-centred and trauma-informed principles can lessen the harms stemming from experiences of sexual harassment. These frameworks can also work to encourage those affected to report their experiences, knowing that they will be supported in doing so (AHRC 2023b).

Employers who provide a wide range of supports for employees affected by sexual harassment demonstrate a commitment to employee safety that goes beyond a written policy. Almost all employers provide access to confidential external counselling and most provide reasonable adjustments to work conditions. However, fewer than 4 in 10 employers provide affected employees with dedicated representative support through the disclosure and/or response process or access to trained, trauma-informed support staff.

Figure 44: Supports provided to employees affected by and involved in sexual harassment

Supports provided to employees affected by and involved in sexual harassment	2024-25	2025-26	Change from 2024-25 (pp)
Confidential external counselling (e.g. EAP)	96	96	0
Reasonable adjustments to work conditions	84	86	2
Information provided to all employees on external support services available	76	77	1
Union/worker representative support throughout the disclosure process and response	37	38	1
Trained, trauma-informed support staff/contact officers	38	38	0

Percentage is of all employers.

Opportunities for better reporting to support effective responses

To build trust that reports of sexual harassment will be handled appropriately, employers need to have effective reporting processes in place, and to clearly communicate the availability of these (AHRC 2023c). Multiple avenues or mechanisms for reporting incidents and risks support employees who wish to disclose or raise concerns about sexual harassment. The majority of employers in 2026 reported offering processes for employees to disclose to human resources and confidential/ethics hotlines, anonymous disclosure, and the opportunity to disclose after their employment has ended.

However, fewer than half of employers have a specific process in place for disclosures about organisational leaders and board members. In addition to gender inequality, power imbalances and a lack of accountability contribute to an environment for sexual harassment to occur (AHRC 2023c).

Figure 45: Options for employees who wish to disclose or raise concerns about sexual harassment

Options for employees who wish to disclose or raise concerns about sexual harassment	2024-25	2025-26	Change from 2024-25 (pp)
Process for disclosure to human resources or other designated responding staff	99	99	0
Process to disclose anonymously	73	74	1
Process for disclosure to confidential/ethics hotline or similar	62	63	1
Process for workers to identify and disclose potential risks of sexual harassment, without a specific incident occurring	62	63	1
Process to disclose after their employment has concluded	56	57	1
Special procedures for disclosures about organisational leaders and board members	42	43	1
Process for disclosure to union/worker representative	33	33	0

Percentage is of all employers.

Employers need better monitoring, evaluation and transparency to assess if prevention is working

77% of employers are collecting data on sexual harassment, providing them with trend and risk information to inform prevention and response efforts. Employers who collect this information are committed to safer workplaces, and safer workplaces lead to increased employee engagement and retention, and more productive employees (WGEA 2023). 23% of employers are not collecting any data, leaving them with a critical gap in the information required to most effectively prevent and respond to sexual harassment.

Figure 46: Data collected on sexual harassment in the workplace

Data collected on sexual harassment in the workplace	2024-25	2025-26
Collects data on sexual harassment in the workplace	75	77
Number of formal disclosures or complaints made in a year	70	93
Outcomes of investigations	61	81
Number of informal disclosures or complaints made in a year	43	58
Gender of the complainant/aggrieved or victim	37	47
Gender of the accused or perpetrator	36	47
Anonymous disclosures through a staff survey	33	44
Other	4	5

Percentage is of employers who collected data on sexual harassment in the workplace.

Visible and proactive oversight by senior leadership is critical for sustaining effective sexual harassment prevention efforts. Employers who report information on sexual harassment to the CEO, KMPs and the governing body provide visibility of culture, risk management practices, and outcomes of reports of sexual harassment to this group.

While the proportion of employers who report this information to CEOs and the governing body has slightly increased since 2024-25, the proportion reporting to KMPs has decreased by 9pp.

Figure 47: Employers who report information on sexual harassment to the CEO, KMP and governing body

Employers who report information on sexual harassment to the CEO, KMP, and governing body	Proportion of employers (%)
CEO	93
KMP	74
Governing body	79

Most employers (83%) who report on sexual harassment to the CEO and governing body are making sure that these role-holders are aware of the outcomes of reports of sexual harassment. But only slightly more than half (57%) provide prevalence statistics. Fewer than 4 in 10 employers include effectiveness of responses to reports of sexual harassment and analysis of sexual harassment trends, and fewer than 1 in 6 employers report on performance against the 7 standards to their CEO and governing body. Only 22% of employers report on the use and context of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) or confidentiality clauses.

Part of managing sexual harassment as an equality, health and safety, and legal risk involves considering the effectiveness of responses to reports (including how NDAs might be incorporated into these responses) and analysis of sexual harassment trends to inform ongoing and future prevention efforts (AHRC 2023c). These are areas where employers can make meaningful improvements to strengthen their prevention and response efforts.

Figure 48: Inclusions in reports on sexual harassment to governing body and CEO

Inclusions in reports on sexual harassment to governing body and CEO	2024-25	2025-26	Change from 2024-25 (pp)
Outcome of reports of sexual harassment	82	83	1
Nature of workplace sexual harassment	77	77	0
Organisational action to prevent and respond to sexual harassment	73	74	1
Consequences for perpetrators of sexual harassment	71	72	1
Prevalence of workplace sexual harassment	57	57	0
Identified risks of workplace sexual harassment	56	57	1
Effectiveness of response to reports of sexual harassment	38	38	0
Analysis of sexual harassment trends and reporter/respondent profiles	34	35	1
Any use and context of non-disclosure agreements or confidentiality clauses as an outcome of disclosure of sexual harassment	22	22	0
Performance against the seven standards outlined by the Australian Human Rights Commission for complying with the positive duty	15	15	0

Percentage is of employers who report on sexual harassment to the governing body and CEO. Employers could provide multiple responses.

Glossary of key terms

Average gender pay gap

An average gender pay gap is the difference between the average earnings for men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's average earnings.

Base salary remuneration

The base salary includes wages, penalty rates and shift and leave loading, for full-time, part-time and casual employees on an annualised full-time equivalent basis.

Designated relevant employer (DRE)

Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, a 'designated relevant employer' (DRE) is an employer who directly employs 500 or more employees. DREs have additional requirements to select and meet, or demonstrate progress against gender equality targets. They must also have a policy or strategy for each of the 6 gender equality indicators.

Employer

Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, an employer must report to WGEA when they have 100 or more employees (and in some cases, in accordance with the Act, as few as 80 employees). Standalone organisations, corporate groups and entities within corporate groups can all meet the threshold of the legislation. In this Scorecard an 'employer' is one required to report to WGEA under the Act. To avoid double-counting, the Scorecard counts employers only when they meet the threshold for employees they directly employ.

Gender pay gap

The gender pay gap is the difference between the average or median remuneration of men and the average or median remuneration of women, expressed as a percentage of men's remuneration. Unless clearly stated as base salary or median, in the Scorecard, WGEA's gender pay gap calculations focus on average total remuneration.

Employers with 100 or more employees reported the remuneration for all their employees to WGEA during the 2023-24 Employer Census. WGEA used this data to calculate employer gender pay gaps. Part-time and casual salaries are converted into annualised full-time equivalent earnings. See WGEA's Employer Gender Pay Gap Technical Guide for further information on how WGEA calculates employer gender pay gaps.

Gender segregation

Gender segregation is the separation of individuals based on gender. This can be industrial, meaning women are concentrated in different industries compared to men, or occupational, meaning women are concentrated in different occupations compared to men. It can also occur 'vertically,' meaning one gender holds more leaderships positions than another. Gender segregation is a key driver of the gender pay gap and can lead to a lifetime of lower accumulated income for women.

Median gender pay gap

The median is the value that falls exactly in the middle of a set of numbers when arranged from smallest to largest. The median gender pay gap is the difference between the median of what men are paid and the median of what women are paid, expressed as a percentage of men's median earnings.

Men-dominated or women-dominated

WGEA classifies industries or workplaces where 60% or more employees are men as 'men-dominated'. Industries or workplaces where 60% or more employees are women are classified as 'women-dominated'. Gender-balanced industries or workplaces have between 40% and 60% men and women employees.

Remuneration quartiles

The remuneration quartiles divide the employees into 4 equal-sized groups – ordered from the lowest-earning employee to the highest-earning employee. The remuneration for these quartiles is total remuneration, and part-time and casual employee pay is annualised to the full-time equivalent.

Total remuneration

Total remuneration includes base salary, penalty rates, shift and leave loading superannuation, bonuses, overtime and additional payments for full-time, part-time and casual employees, on an annualised full-time equivalent basis. It gives a more complete picture of the scale of the gender pay gap.

Workforce gender composition

Workforce gender composition measures the participation rates of different genders in a workplace. This includes the proportion of different genders by role and in different pay quartiles. As a business attracts, retains and promotes employees, the number in each group will change. For this reason, employers report data on workforce gender composition based on a selected snapshot date.

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Australian Government

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

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