



Women's Budget Statement

QUEENSLAND BUDGET 2023–24



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Contents

Foreword	5
Vision for Queensland women and girls	6
Priority action areas	6
Improving economic outcomes for Queensland women and girls	8
 Economic security	12
 Safety, health and wellbeing	14
 Elevating First Nations women	18
 Diverse backgrounds and experiences	20
 Empowerment and recognition	22
Women's economic outcomes	24



Foreword

We know that a stable job and economic security is key for successful, safe and prosperous lives for women.

The *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27* acknowledges that economic security is at the centre of gender equality and has a definitive impact on the ability of women and girls to achieve and thrive in all areas of their life.

Gender inequality creates the conditions that increase women's economic insecurity due to the additional barriers on women's ability to fully participate in the paid workforce and the over-representation of women's participation in unpaid labour and caregiving. To further advance gender equality, it is imperative that economic security for all women is obtained and the contribution that women can make to the Queensland economy is achieved.

Real and enduring action must be taken to address the economic inequality many women continue to experience. Economic opportunities must be equally available to women and girls, and the economy must benefit from the important contribution that can be made by women.

Advancing women's economic equality is fundamental to achieving gender equality and creating a prosperous and resilient Queensland economy. The Queensland Government has made achieving gender equality a priority and, while strong progress has been made, there is still more that can be done to fully deliver on this priority.

This Women's Budget Statement outlines investment in programs and initiatives contributing to achieving gender equality and supporting secure economic futures for women across the priority action areas of the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27*.



Vision for Queensland women and girls

Our vision is that women and girls have equal rights and equal access to opportunities. Women and girls are safe, valued, and able to freely participate and succeed in the economic, social and cultural opportunities available. Women and girls are recognised and celebrated for their achievements and contributions to the community.

Priority action areas

The Queensland Government is committed to supporting all Queensland women to have equal access to opportunities, with initiatives and investment in the 2023–24 Budget focused on 5 priority action areas:



Economic security

Economic security is at the centre of gender equality, underpinning all other elements of gender equality throughout women's lives. We are committed to working together to avoid recreating inequities of the past, address inequities still present today and ensure that all Queenslanders are able to thrive from the economic prosperity that we know comes from increased gender equality.



Safety, health and wellbeing

Women's safety continues to be an ongoing priority issue of concern to the community and although we have made significant progress over the past few years, there is much more to do to change the story for Queenslanders affected by men's violence against women. There is also work to do to support women's equitable access to health care and strengthen broader wellbeing.



First Nations women

Gender equality will never be achieved unless First Nations women's outcomes are improved. First Nations women need to be in control of decisions that impact their lives and supported to raise their voices and truth tell about historical and current inequalities.



Women with diverse backgrounds and experiences

Gender inequality impacts different people in different ways at different stages of their life, particularly if they have intersecting diverse experiences such as disability, diverse cultural background, diverse sexuality and gender identity, or experience of poverty. Older women experience not only the impacts of current gender inequalities, but also the cumulative impacts of gender inequality experienced throughout their lives.

Women from regional, remote and rural areas also experience additional challenges while making unique contributions to the Queensland economy and community. There is much to be learned from the experiences of all these groups of women, which will help tailor responses to support them to equitably access opportunities.



Empowerment and recognition

Committing to supporting and empowering women into leadership roles in every aspect of life is part of our vision to ensure equal access to opportunities for all women and girls. We must recognise, celebrate and inspire women, so that their successes are visible and normalised right across the community. We will also work to ensure women's voices are heard at every table, to influence the big decisions that affect everyone.



Improving economic outcomes for Queensland women and girls

Queensland women and girls have many more opportunities than generations before them. Today, more women are participating in education and the workforce, more women are leading in business and politics, and more women are benefiting from improved health outcomes.

Despite the significant progress towards gender equality, women continue to face barriers that limit their economic opportunities. These barriers are reflected across a broad range of economic outcomes over women's lifetimes including lower labour force participation, a gender pay gap and inequalities in economic outcomes in retirement.

First Nations women and women with diverse backgrounds and experiences face additional barriers and disadvantage that compound economic inequality.

These experiences are not unique to Queensland. Gender inequality persists across Australia and globally. Improving women's economic opportunities and achieving gender equality requires action from all levels of government, organisations, industry, and the community.

The economic benefits of improving women's opportunities

Economic equality is central to gender equality and the delivery of a fairer, more inclusive and prosperous society. It is about ensuring all Queenslanders have equal opportunities to participate in economic life – to access education, participate in the workforce, be involved in economic decision making, and fulfill their aspirations.

Addressing barriers to equality and improving women's economic opportunities will improve outcomes for women – it will promote greater workforce participation, help address the gender pay gap which contributes to lower lifetime earnings and improve economic security. It will also deliver broader social and economic benefits for individuals, families, organisations, and the community.

There are a range of barriers that limit choices about how women and men participate in the workforce and family life. These include barriers that prevent women from seeking paid work or working more hours, utilising their skills and qualifications, pursuing education and employment in particular fields, changing jobs, and seeking promotions.

Addressing these barriers will boost workforce participation and productivity across the economy. It will help untap the economic potential of Queensland's highly skilled women, boost labour supply and support greater utilisation of talent. This will support a larger and more dynamic, resilient, and productive workforce which is a key enabler of economic growth and will be increasingly important as Queensland's population ages.



Gender equality indicators¹



Labour force participation

WOMEN
62.3%
MEN
70%



Gender pay gap*

14.6%
(\$14,170 less
per year)



Average superannuation balance

WOMEN
\$132,097
MEN
\$167,516



Attainment of bachelor degree or above (aged 25–44) (Australia)

WOMEN
50%
MEN
39%



Proportion of workers employed part-time

WOMEN
43.1%
MEN
18.7%



Underemployment ratio

WOMEN
8.2%
MEN
5.3%



Unpaid domestic work (30 hours or more per week) (Australia)

WOMEN
14%
MEN
4%



Business owner-managers

WOMEN
37.8%
MEN
62.2%



Queensland public sector

51%
of public sector
leadership roles are
held by women

A more detailed analysis on gender equality and women's economic outcomes is outlined in the Women's economic outcomes section of this Budget Statement.

*The gender pay gap represents the difference between the average weekly ordinary time earnings of full-time female and male employees.

¹ Data for labour force participation, proportion of workers employed part-time, status of employment and underemployment ratio from ABS, Labour Force, Australia April 2023. Data for Gender Pay Gap from ABS Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, May 2022, Seasonally Adjusted Series. Data for educational attainment from ABS, Education and Work, May 2022. Data for unpaid domestic work from ABS, Unpaid work and care: Census, 2021. Data for superannuation from ABS, Survey of Income and Housing Australia, 2019-20, customised data Queensland Public Sector Leadership includes Senior Officer, Senior Executive and Chief Executive levels, data from Queensland Government Public Service Commission, Queensland public sector workforce profile, March 2022.

Investing in economic equality in 2023–24

The 2023–24 Budget includes an investment of **\$16.3 million** over 4 years on a range of targeted new or expanded initiatives to enhance women's economic security, with a focus on:

- supporting women in male dominated industries (including construction and trades)
- supporting women in business and innovation
- supporting disadvantaged and vulnerable women to access and maximise economic opportunities.

The 2023–24 Budget also includes **\$645 million** over 4 years to provide 15 hours of free kindergarten each week from 1 January 2024 for all 4-year-old children.

The Queensland Government has made a commitment to enhancing gender responsive budget approaches.

As part of this commitment, a process was developed to enable assessment of whether 2023–24 Budget bids aligned with the impact areas identified in the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27*. Key agencies workshopped the bids through this process to identify potential gender impacts arising from bids, both in terms of high-impact and high-priority. This review also identified areas where further work was required to meet desired policy responses.

This resulted in the development and funding of a package of measures aimed specifically at enhancing the economic opportunities and economic security of women. This is the start of gender responsive budgeting in Queensland with further work being undertaken for implementation in future budgets.



Economic security

The 2023–24 Budget includes significant investment to enhance and deliver on the Queensland Government’s priority to achieve economic equality, inclusion and economic participation for women and girls. This is not only good for women, it is good for our economy.

- **\$4.6 million** over 2 years from 2023–24 for the Women in Trade Apprenticeships Mentoring program to support women who are undertaking a trade apprenticeship and provide them with a network to improve completion rates
- **\$3.2 million** to support the Future Women – Jobs Academy program for a 2-year period to train, support and connect up to 500 unemployed and underemployed Queensland women with paid employment and training programs
- **\$2.8 million** over 4 years from 2023–24 for the Women in Network grant program to support girls and women’s participation and pathways in male dominated industries, including through support to recruit, retain, upskill, and progress into leadership positions in these industries
- **\$8 million** over 3 years from 2023–24 to continue and expand delivery of the Backing Female Founders program launching a raft of support and key initiatives for women entrepreneurs in innovation-driven enterprises at all stages of the business development lifecycle to grow and scale their businesses
- **\$533,000** in 2023–24 for the Fresh Start For Me program to establish online resources to support women, post domestic and family violence (DFV) crisis, to return to, or enter the workforce
- **\$645 million** over 4 years from 2023–24 making 15 hours of kindergarten free from 1 January 2024 for all 4-year-old children. Removing cost as a barrier to participation, relieving cost of living pressures, supporting labour market participation, particularly for women, and improving educational outcomes, are all expected benefits
- **\$250.8 million** is being invested in 2023–24 to provide housing and support to vulnerable Queenslanders, including older women and those experiencing domestic and family violence
- **\$140 million** over 4 years from 2021–22 for the Back to Work program will see continued support for women, young people, First Nations peoples, people with disability, and long-term unemployed, back into employment. Since 2021, women have accounted for over 40 per cent of all approved applications with almost 700 women supported as at 31 May 2023
- **\$80 million** per year ongoing for Skilling Queenslanders for Work (SQW) to increase workforce participation and improve employment opportunities for disadvantaged Queenslanders. Since 2015 and as at 31 May 2023, 25,440 women have secured a job as a direct result of participating in SQW
- Over **\$70 million** for the 2022–25 Action Plan of the *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022–2032* which includes a strong focus on maximising workforce participation for employers to ‘think differently’, not just in how they recruit but also what systemic changes need to occur in workplaces and industries to retain workers to fully harness the skills and capabilities of women in our workforce
- **\$540,000** is available in 2023–24 for the Investing in Queensland Women grant program. Grants of up to \$15,000 are provided for events and projects to advance gender equality, respect for women, and promote and protect

the rights and wellbeing of women and girls across the state. Fifty-eight initiatives have been supported across the state since the program commenced in 2021

- Free and subsidised vocational education and training with a focus on high priority qualifications, including in the community services and health industries, seeks to increase the number of trade qualified Queenslanders. Between January 2021 and December 2022, 10,207 girls and women accessed training under the Free Apprenticeships and Free TAFE for Under 25s programs. Fee-Free TAFE commenced in January 2023, replacing the previous Free TAFE for Under 25s, with more than 14,000 girls and women having accessed this initiative to date
- QBuild is committed to attracting and supporting women through an apprenticeship in a variety of trades. As at April 2023, 20 per cent of QBuild's apprentice workforce is female
- The Women in Manufacturing Seminars showcase the opportunities and achievements of women in Queensland's advanced manufacturing industry. The ongoing series utilises a panel of prominent women in manufacturing to share their experience and promote career opportunities for women in the manufacturing industry.

Equity and diversity in the public sector

The Queensland Government is committed to advancing the rights of women across the public sector. The Public Sector Commission, through the establishment of the Office of the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity, is working towards:

- improving policies, procedures and practices that deliver better employment outcomes for women and address gender-based disparities in employment in the Queensland public sector
- improving the way in which the Queensland public sector prevents and responds to sexual harassment in the workplace
- developing new approaches to recruitment that integrate merit and equity
- developing new audit processes that assist agencies to identify areas of potential gender inequity and plan for change
- establishing a strategy that increases visibility and connectedness of the most senior women in the Queensland public sector
- using data to inform and progress the careers of women in the public sector into senior leadership roles
- improving the work experience for Queensland public sector employees who identify as LGBTIQ+
- achieving equity in senior leadership roles in the Queensland public sector by 2026
- enhancing support to employees affected by DFV, through the provision of leave and other supports.



Safety, health and wellbeing

The Queensland Government is continuing to deliver and implement significant reforms to prevent domestic, family and sexual violence, and strengthen the response to women who have experienced it. We are also supporting women and girls to access equitable health services and strengthen their overall wellbeing.

We are implementing real action to ensure economic security for women and girls including through support for greater workforce participation. This will improve access to a stable income and financial independence, which are vital protective and enabling factors for the safety, health and wellbeing of all women and girls.

Safety

- **\$225 million** over 5 years and \$32.7 million per annum ongoing from 2027–28 to support the response to the second report of the Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce. This package places victim-survivors at the centre of how we respond to sexual violence and includes:
 - expanding the Sexual Assault Response Team in 2 new locations
 - court upgrades in 81 locations to make it easier for victim-survivors to give video evidence
 - educational campaign to improve awareness and understanding about sexual violence, including consent
 - establishing a Victims' Commissioner
 - staged expansion of adult restorative justice services for adult sexual and DFV offences
 - piloting a victims' advocate service in key locations to inform the development of a statewide service.
- The response package will also support the development and implementation of a range of programs to support women and girls in the criminal justice system as accused persons and offenders including:
 - strengthening the Murri Court model
 - additional early bail support program services in northern and central Queensland, based on the existing models in Brisbane
 - legal advice and assistance to women in custody
 - pilot of a voluntary case conferencing model in sexual violence cases in the District Court of Queensland
 - improved health, wellbeing, prenatal and postnatal care, and birth experiences in prison and detention
 - rehabilitation support for women in prison and girls in detention
 - additional services for women and girls to support them to reintegrate in their community, including housing support.

Women's Safety and Justice Taskforce (WSJT) – Report 1

Progress on implementing the government's response to the first report of the WSJT has been significant.

Key achievements during 2022–23 include:

- passed the Domestic and Family Violence Protection (Combating Coercive Control) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2022, which strengthens laws to address the patterned nature of coercive control
- established a Commission of Inquiry into Police Responses to Domestic and Family Violence, with government supporting in principle all 78 recommendations in the final report released on 21 November 2022
- appointed Queensland's inaugural First Nations Justice Officer
- launched the new Prep to Year 12 Respect program
- uplifted DFV perpetrator intervention programs
- appointed an Independent Implementation Supervisor to oversee the reform program.

Key reforms to be delivered in 2023–24 include:

- development of a whole-of-government strategy and action plan for culturally safe services for First Nations people who interact with the criminal justice system
- introduction of legislative amendments to create a new offence to criminalise coercive control
- establishment of a peak body for DFV services
- roll-out of additional High Risk Team locations to provide coordinated multi-agency responses to high risk, complex cases of DFV
- commencement of co-responder model trial involving a joint Queensland Police Service and specialist DFV services to enhance responses to DFV calls for service.

- Additional funding of **\$58.3 million** over 4 years from 2023–24 and **\$20.7 million** per annum ongoing from 2027–28 to uplift existing funding for the domestic, family and sexual violence sector to address increasing demand and gaps in service coverage
- **\$44 million** in 2023–24 will continue the investment in women's DFV shelters and support services. This investment ensures accommodation, counselling and practical support can be provided to women and children experiencing DFV
- Forty-three Intensive Family Support services will share in **\$61 million** in 2023–24 to support families with multiple and complex challenges. A further **\$18 million** across 17 Family and Child Connect services will link families with advice, information and suitable support services. This support is provided to help make positive changes to family circumstances and reduce the need for statutory intervention

Safety cont.

- **\$21.6 million** over 4 years from 2023–24 for trauma-informed DFV training to the frontline health workforce across Queensland, and mental health, alcohol and other drug service participation in DFV High Risk Teams. This will further support implementation of WSJT Report 1 recommendations
- **\$3.4 million** per annum ongoing for the Safe Havens program to provide culturally appropriate services to respond to the safety needs of children, young people and their families experiencing or witnessing DFV in Cherbourg, Palm Island, and Mornington Island
- **Over \$500,000** in 2023–24 for Gendered Response to Bail Support for girls and young women aged 10–17 years at risk of being remanded into custody to help them complete bail.

Health and wellbeing

- Better Care Together investment of more than **\$122 million** for initiatives to transform, optimise and grow services to support the mental health and wellbeing of new parents and infants across Queensland
- As part of the **\$106.7 million** Student Wellbeing Package, the GPs in Schools Pilot supports 50 Queensland state schools to provide secondary-aged students with free access to a GP at school one day per week. The package also supports additional psychologists or similar wellbeing professionals being employed over 3 years to ensure students in all Queensland state schools have access to support for their wellbeing and mental health at school
- **\$63 million** per annum ongoing in breast cancer screening services for the early detection of breast cancer in Queensland women
- **\$42 million** over 4 years from 2023–24 for continued support for maternity birthing services in regional and rural locations and strengthening outreach obstetric and gynaecology services
- **Over \$1.5 million** per annum ongoing for the Young Mothers for Young Women program, a partnership between Micah Projects Inc and the Mater Mothers Hospital. The program supports young women who are pregnant or parenting in practical ways, enabling their social and economic participation to enhance the stability and wellbeing of the family unit. A range of integrated and individualised support is provided, including antenatal and midwifery services, education, advocacy, counselling, and budget and home management skills
- **\$150,000** in 2023–24 for True Relationships and Reproductive Health to deliver the Relationship Ready Program to educators, parents, girls and young women from P–12 and young people not engaged in traditional schooling
- Continued support for Women's Infolink with funding of **\$36,000** in 2023–24 to provide women and girls with access to information and referral for links to services that they require across the state.



Safe and Diverse Communities

The Empowered and Safe Communities project is an initiative of the Centre Against Domestic Abuse (CADA) in Moreton Bay. The short-term project offers culturally inclusive mothers' groups in 3 locations across Moreton running between February and October 2023, funded through the Safe and Diverse Communities grants program.

Empowered and Safe Communities mothers' groups provide opportunities to increase social connection between women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and to enhance knowledge of supports in the community through visiting guest specialists from a range of services. The group is facilitated by DFV and cultural specialists who guide participants through explorations of culture, motherhood, women's health and wellbeing, and DFV to enhance participants' knowledge of wellbeing and healthy relationships as well as how to find help. Translated resources, referrals and culturally safe support are offered to participants as required throughout and beyond the duration of the initiative.

A participant of the program, who migrated to Australia, often cares for grandchildren. Her wellbeing and quality of life have been impacted by isolation, anxiety and a gambling addiction.

The participant was linked with a practitioner as well as a Financial Counselling program provided by the Women's Legal Service Queensland. The participant was also referred to a multicultural mental health specialist.

The participant reported a reduction in her addictive gambling behaviour as a result of joining the group and stated, "I now have something to distract me". She also expressed to facilitators and group members that she feels less lonely due to connecting with other women who have shared experiences.



Elevating First Nations women

First Nations women make valuable and unique contributions to Queensland and demonstrate strength and resilience despite their collective experience of long-term racism, violence, and injustice. The Queensland Government will ensure there are social, cultural and economic systems in place that elevate First Nations women and girls' rights, health, safety and wellbeing.

- **\$41 million** in 2023–24 is provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Family Wellbeing Services to improve the safety and living conditions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families who may be experiencing vulnerability. This funding also supports 9 Specialist Domestic and Family Violence Workers that provide advice on safety planning and engagement strategies for families affected by DFV. Ongoing annual funding increases to **\$50 million** by 2026–27
- **\$8.3 million** from 2022–23 to 2024–25 for the *Paving the Way* — *First Nations Training Strategy* supporting skills development and training pathways for First Nations people that will lead to sustainable, local jobs, and empower them to achieve self-determination through economic participation. Tailored support will help women and girls needing additional assistance to better access and navigate the training system
- **\$3.2 million** in 2023–24 for School Engagement Programs that support and enable First Nations girls and young women to remain actively engaged at school, complete Year 12 and move into work or further post school study through their attendance, in-school mentoring and intensive case management support
- **\$400,000** in 2023–24 for Growing Deadly Families to provide a number of scholarships and mentoring support to First Nations undergraduate and postgraduate students currently enrolled in midwifery, child health, endorsement for scheduled medicines and perinatal mental health courses, to support completion of studies and successful entry into the maternity workforce
- **\$370,000** per annum ongoing is provided to the Kowanyama Women's Group to continue delivering programs structured to promote holistic health education and empower the women of Kowanyama
- Continued support to deliver the Clancestry Festival with **\$350,000** in 2023–24 supporting a large program of over 100 First Nations artists reflecting the gender diversity of our First Nations community through activities, concerts, workshops, music and more
- **\$165,000** in 2023–24 for continued support of the Queensland Indigenous Womens Ranger Network, which supports First Nations women rangers by providing professional development, mentoring, and leadership in caring for country. The network has grown from 24 rangers in 2018 to 146 rangers in 2023.



Georgina Dorante, owner and operator Kirr-Rock Munchies

Deadly Women

The non-profit Cairns-based Reef and Rainforest Research Centre and its regional training partners INLOC received \$15,000 as part of the Investing in Queensland Women grant program. The grant was provided to supplement their existing Indigenous Women's Leadership and Training program, delivered in one of the most remote parts of Queensland – the Torres Strait. Participants in the 10-day Deadly Women course worked on presentation, resumes, and plans for small businesses, as well as achieving their Certificate I in Workplace Skills and Certificate I in Tourism (Australian Indigenous Culture).

One of the graduates, Georgina Dorante, has since started her new small business, running a food cart that services locals and visitors to Kirriri (Hammond Island). Business has been so brisk, she's even had to hire a local employee to help out!

"Today with all the knowledge I've taken on board, I am now a small business owner of a mobile food and drink cart called Kirr-Rock Munchies," Georgina said. "I do thank INLOC for this program as it was well worth attending. I am very proud of my achievement, and I give a high clap for the ladies who delivered and mentored us through to the end."



Diverse backgrounds and experiences

The Queensland Government is committed to amplifying the voices of diverse communities, and to advocate for action that delivers a truly accessible and equal Queensland for everyone.

- **\$7.7 million** per annum ongoing is provided to Seniors Legal and Support Services and other programs enabling continued delivery of prevention and intervention responses to address elder abuse, of which almost 70 per cent of victims are women
- **\$4 million** in 2023–24 is provided for Seniors Social Isolation Services to help older people stay connected and engaged with their communities. More than 75 per cent of the clients are older women
- More than **\$2.8 million** in 2023–24 to continue support for the Community Action for a Multicultural Society Program to address local barriers to economic and social inclusion by supporting people from culturally diverse backgrounds, including women, to have opportunities for inclusion in local employment, services, networks, and industries
- This is complemented by **\$3 million** for the Celebrating Multicultural Queensland program for multicultural events and projects that contribute to building an inclusive, harmonious, and united Queensland
- **\$250,000** per annum ongoing is provided for the Safe and Diverse Communities grants program to support targeted community-led projects to take proactive steps towards improving women's safety in culturally and linguistically diverse communities across the state
- **\$780,000** in 2023–24 will be provided to the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) Country Kitchens program to build the capacity of the QCWA volunteer members to support regional, rural, and remote Queensland communities to improve their health by adopting healthier lifestyle practices
- The Queensland Disability Advocacy Program continues to provide support across Queensland. It provided almost 2,400 advocacy services to over 650 women and girls across Queensland, between July 2022 and March 2023.

Taking Off

Taking Off is a documentary that tells the stories of 6 older women aged between 59 and 72, who live and surf on the Gold Coast. Each of the women has come to surfing for wildly different reasons which helps this story speak to the hearts of older women in Queensland and around the world. The documentary opens and contributes to a conversation that explores and changes the narrative of what it means for women to get older, to be engaged in the local community and to age well.

Some of the surfers and crew stated that “*Taking Off* has given me the opportunity to learn an entirely new skillset in filming and video editing, as well as the chance to connect with some incredible women who are now mentors and role models.”

This groundbreaking piece of work was fully funded by a Queensland Government grant provided to Surf Witches. The initiative has drawn a line in the sand, opening a conversation that needs to be had about older women stepping up and no longer hiding as they age. One participant of the initiative stated that she is “now more comfortable sharing my story in the hope it encourages others to live big”.



Margaret Cummins, now 72, took up surfing at 69!
Photo by: Hannah Jessup



Empowerment and recognition

The Queensland Government encourages the non-government sector to follow our lead by setting targets for women in leadership positions and women on boards. We have met and exceeded our commitment to ensure that at least 50 per cent of nominated directors on the Organising Committee for the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games Board and members of the Brisbane Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy Committee are women.

- Hosting the FIFA Women's World Cup 2023 aims to drive increased participation in sport amongst women and girls, promote greater gender equity and provide a legacy in terms of enhanced facilities for use by women and girls. This is supported by **\$10 million** in 2023–24 to deliver the first round of the Female Facilities and Inclusive Infrastructure Program
- **\$9 million** over 3 years from 2024–25 to continue supporting the World Science Festival, which helps promote science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) engagement and learning activities amongst women
- **\$500,000** in 2023–24 to support continuation of the Engaging Science Grants Program aimed at increasing participation in science-based activities. Since 2016–17, 119 female recipients have been awarded almost **\$1.2 million** to support their participation in STEM education activities and training
- **\$120,000** in 2023–24 for the STEM Girl Power initiative which provides up to 60 Year 10 girls from Queensland state schools with opportunities to attend STEM workshops, undertake laboratory, and STEM career awareness activities, and take part in regional activities to build their leadership skills
- Continued support for the Queensland Women in STEM Prize to encourage, support and recognise the participation of women in STEM careers. Each year the competition grows, attracting entries from the highest calibre of female experts in STEM fields with over 300 applications since 2016
- **\$350,000** in 2023–24 to support the Queensland Indigenous Youth Leadership Program, supporting First Nations Queenslanders, aged 18–25, to come together to strengthen their leadership skills and build their capacity to drive change in local communities
- **\$450,000** in 2023–24 will support a range of initiatives as part of the Women in Local Government Strategy including the Deadly Women in Local Government Conference and attendance of women from remote, rural and Indigenous areas at the Local Government Managers Association Queensland's Women in Local Government Conference
- South Bank Corporation's First Nations initiative provides **\$50,000** in 2023–24 to promote unity, strength, and cultural awareness for First Nations women, by creating training platforms, and providing sponsorship of events
- **\$140,000** in 2023–24 to support the Women in Recreational Fishing Network for an online platform where female anglers of all experience levels, backgrounds and ages are encouraged to learn from one another, and share their best fishing photos and experiences. The program has reached over 1,000 members in the first 12 months

- Support continues for a range of other awards that highlight the outstanding achievements of women including the AgriFutures Rural Women's Award, Australian Women in Music Awards, and the Inspector-General Emergency Management International Women's Day awards
- The Queensland Health Next Generation Program provides an opportunity for high-performing female leaders to increase capability building and career progression into executive leadership roles.

Coaching Change

The University of Queensland Football Club, through the Coaching Change program, provided 4 female coaches with the opportunity to attend a female-only C Diploma coaching course. Funding, provided as part of the Investing in Queensland Women grant program, covered the full cost of program attendance as well as provided coaching kits for participants.

The 4 coaches gained access to invaluable networks, leadership and organisational skills, an abundance of sport-specific education, and were empowered to step into leadership roles. For many of the club's players it will be their first time having a female coach – let alone a woman with a coaching diploma. For one of the players, it will be the first time in her 22 years of football that she has been coached by a woman!

Feedback from players has been incredibly positive. They have reported an increased feeling of safety with having a female coach with some younger players stating they 'didn't know that women could be coaches too'.

This initiative is breaking the stigma around women in sports leadership roles. The club hopes to grow the cohort of women coaches so that more girls have access to female coaches and leadership opportunities.



University of Queensland Football Club, Coaching Change program participants.

Women's economic outcomes

Despite significant progress towards gender equality, women continue to face barriers that limit their economic opportunities and choices and ability to realise their full potential.

This is reflected across a range of economic outcomes over women's lifetimes, including (1) women's participation in the workforce; (2) the gender pay gap; and (3) outcomes in retirement.

Women's participation in the workforce

Female labour force participation has risen significantly over the last 40 years and the participation gap between men and women has been narrowing (from around 34 percentage points in 1980 to around 7 percentage points in 2022 in Queensland). However, women's labour force participation rates still remain below men's, both in Queensland and nationally.

In April 2023, the participation gap between women and men in Queensland was 7.7 percentage points (62.3 per cent for women and 70 per cent for men), compared to 8.7 percentage points at the national level (Chart 1). For Queensland, this implies up to around 174,000 fewer working-age women in the labour force than if they participated at the same rate as men.

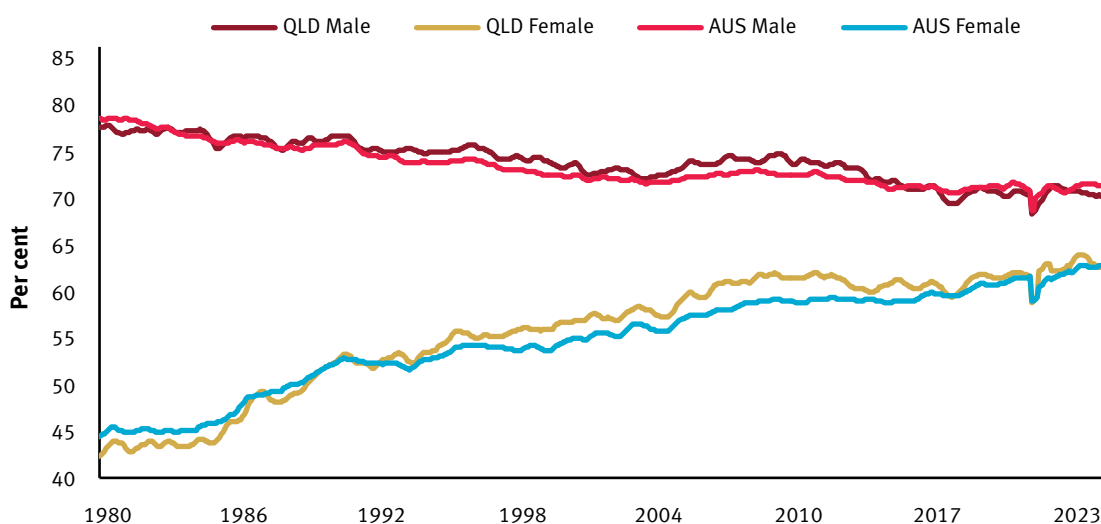


Chart 1: Participation rate by sex, Queensland and Australia. Source: ABS Labour Force.

The participation rate of women and men in Queensland is similar when entering the workforce, however women's participation rates diverge from men's during their 20s and 30s, around the ages at which many women have children. Women's labour force participation rates then remain below men's through to retirement (Chart 2). This contributes to economic inequality for women over their lifetime, including into retirement.

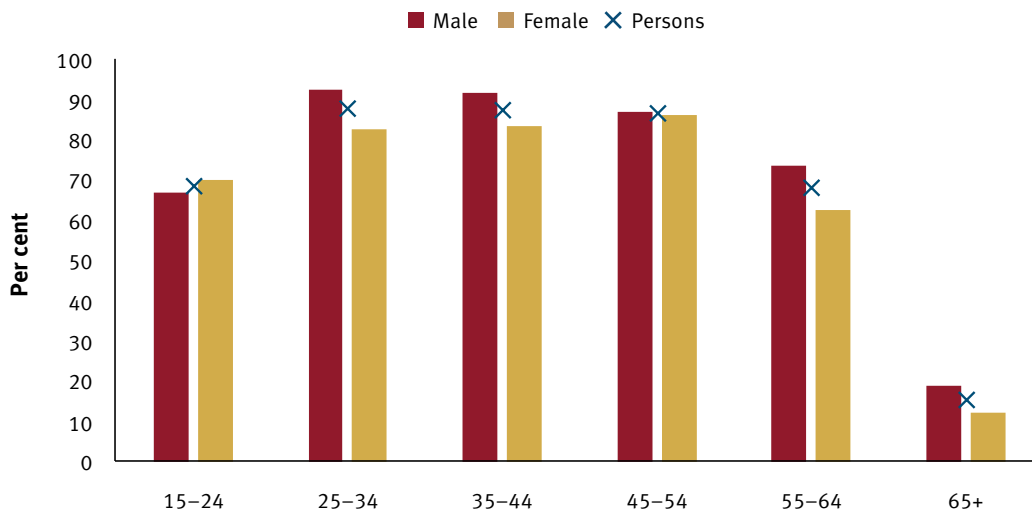


Chart 2: Participation rate by age cohort and sex, Queensland. Source: ABS Labour Force.

Women are more likely to work part-time, despite wanting to work more hours

The proportion of both women and men working part-time has increased over time, however the rate of part-time work among employed women (43.1 per cent) remains more than double that of employed men (18.7 per cent) (Chart 3).

Increased access to part-time work can have a range of positive benefits, including offering women and men greater choice about how they balance paid and unpaid work and care. It can also facilitate participation where women or men may not otherwise work.

However, there is evidence that part-time work has historically limited opportunities for career progression and contributes to lower life-time earnings and the overall gender imbalance in terms of economic outcomes.

Women are also more likely to be underemployed than men, a trend that has persisted for the last 40 years in Queensland and across Australia. This means a greater proportion of employed women (8.2 per cent at April 2023) would prefer, and are available for, more hours of work, than employed men (5.3 per cent at April 2023).²

² ABS Labour Force.

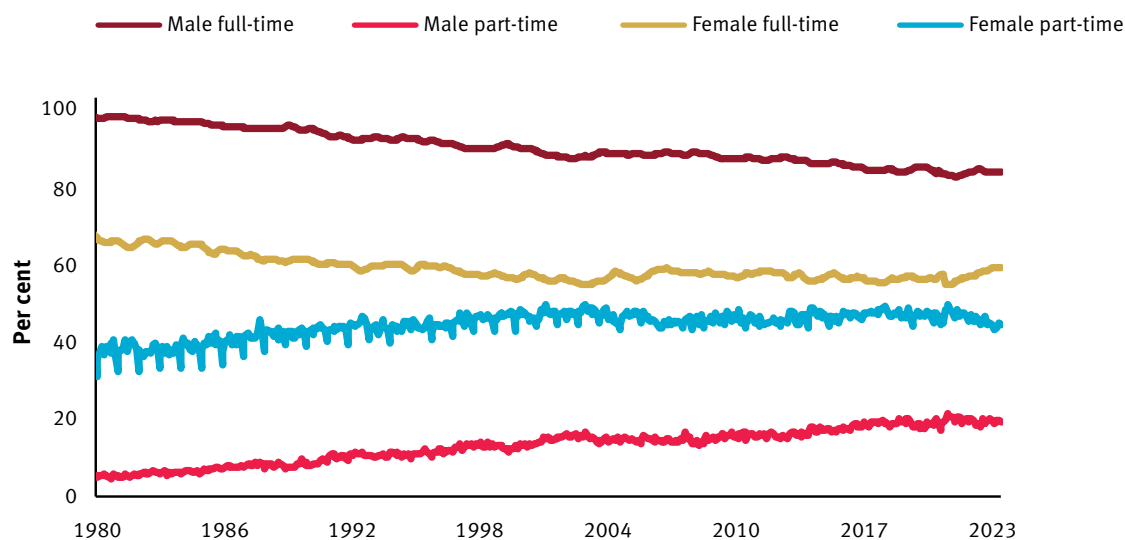


Chart 3: Share of part-time and full-time employees by sex, Queensland. Source: ABS Labour Force.
Note: Part-time employment counts are original for Queensland, other series are trend.

Women have higher educational attainment than men, but are more likely to be over or underqualified for their occupations

Queensland women are highly educated – they are more likely than men to hold bachelor degrees, graduate diplomas and postgraduate qualifications as their highest level of education. Nationally, 50 per cent of women aged 25–44 held a bachelor degree or above, compared to 39 per cent of men, in 2022.

Within the same age group, men were more likely than women to have a certificate, diploma or advanced diploma as their highest qualification (around 35 per cent of men compared to around 28 per cent of women in 2022).³

Despite being highly educated, only 53 per cent of women are likely to have skills appropriately matched to the occupations they work in (compared to 62 per cent of men) and are more likely to be either over or underqualified for their occupations (Chart 4).

The skills mismatch may be partially explained by women with children preferring more flexible jobs⁴. Research also suggests that women are more likely to move into roles they may be less suited to or take a lower paying job when faced with harassment in the workforce.⁵

To the extent that women's skills, education or qualifications are not being utilised as effectively as they could be, this can result in less than optimal economic outcomes for women, and impede overall labour productivity and the competitiveness of Queensland's industries.

³ ABS Education and Work Australia.

⁴ ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

⁵ McLaughlin H, Uggen C, and Blackstone A (2017) 'The Economic and Career Effects of Sexual Harassment on Working Women', *Gender & Society*, 31(3):333–358.

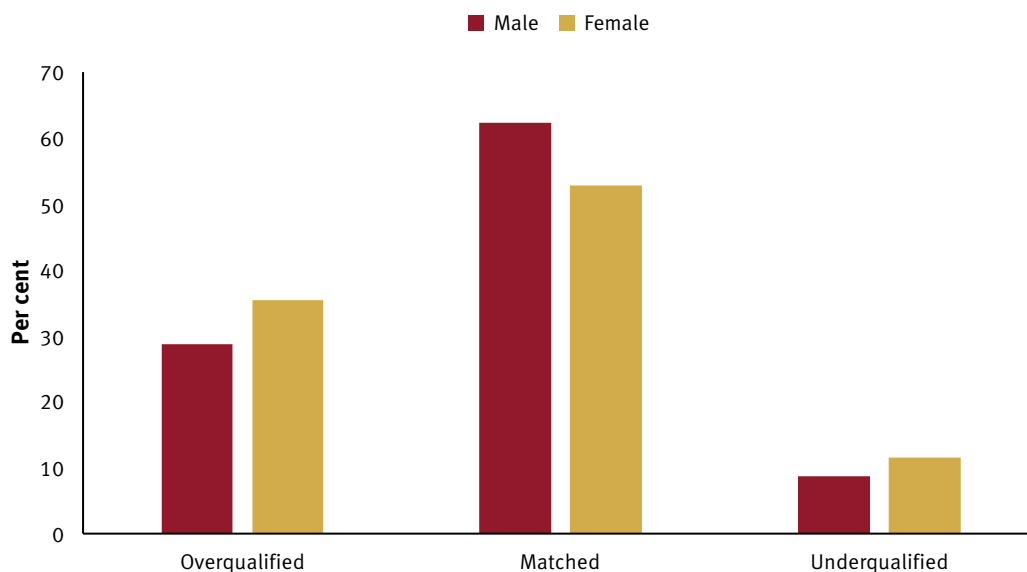


Chart 4: Qualification mismatch, by sex, Queensland, 2021. Source: ABS Labour Force, e61 Institute and Queensland Treasury.

First Nations women and women from diverse backgrounds can face additional barriers to workforce participation

There is growing evidence that First Nations women, and women from diverse groups, including women from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds and women with disability, face multiple and compounding disadvantages in terms of gender inequality, including in the workforce.⁶

First Nations women have experienced persistently lower workforce participation when compared to other Queensland women. Consistent with national trends, the participation rate of First Nations Queensland women (55.9 per cent) is below that of non-Indigenous Queensland women (63.1 per cent).⁷

For Queensland women with a disability, the participation rate was 50.6 per cent in 2018 compared to 80.3 per cent for women without disability.⁸

Analysis of the labour force status of migrants in Queensland and Australia also indicates significant disparities between the outcomes for migrant men and women, with women less likely to participate in the labour force, and more likely to work part time.⁹

⁶ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (n.d.) *Gender equality and intersecting forms of diversity*, WGEA website, accessed May 2023.

⁷ ABS Census 2021 and Queensland Treasury.

⁸ ABS 2018 Survey of Disability, Ageing and Carers and Queensland Treasury.

⁹ ABS Labour Force and Queensland Treasury.

What's driving women's lower participation in the workforce?

There are a range of factors that constrain choices about how women and men participate in the workforce, including the distribution of unpaid work and caring responsibilities, access to flexible working arrangements, and availability of supports – such as access to affordable child care – that help facilitate participation.

Unequal distribution of unpaid work and caring responsibilities

Consistent with global trends and reflecting embedded social norms, Australian women do more unpaid work than men – around an extra 1.4 hours on average a day.¹⁰ Approximately 14 per cent of Australian women reported undertaking 30 hours or more of unpaid work every week, compared to only 4 per cent of men in 2021.¹¹ This includes caring for children and other family members, and performing domestic duties such as housework, food preparation, shopping and caring for pets.

Women spend more time caring for children than men¹² and are also more likely to be the primary carers of people with a disability or long-term health conditions and older people¹³.

ABS survey data suggests that caring for children is the most common barrier for women who want to work or work more hours (24.6 per cent compared to less than 1 per cent of men), while for men it is long-term sickness or disability (34.5 per cent) (Chart 5).

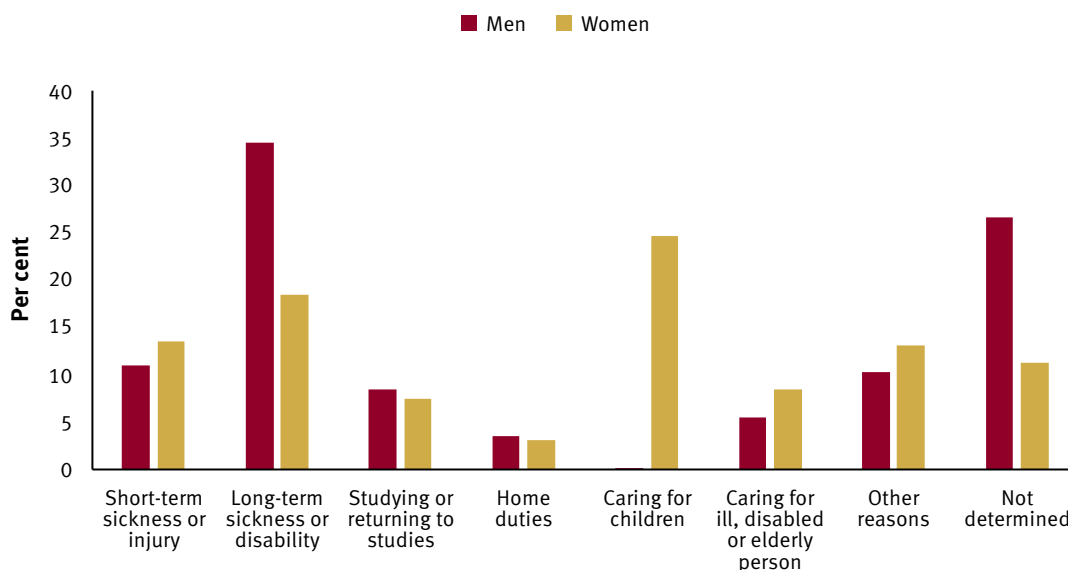


Chart 5: Main reason not available to start work or work more hours, Australia 2020–21.

Source: ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

¹⁰ ABS How Australians Use Their Time and Queensland Treasury.

¹¹ ABS Unpaid work and care: Census.

¹² ABS How Australians Use Their Time and Queensland Treasury.

¹³ ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

Of those people available but not looking for work, 12.6 per cent of women identified caring for children as the main reason, compared to less than 1.1 per cent of men.¹⁴

These disproportionate caring responsibilities mean women are more likely to work part time or casually, experience career interruptions, work in occupations or industries that offer more flexibility, and have lower superannuation balances. The association of caring responsibilities as ‘women’s work’ may also mean that male carers face challenges, including less access to support to balance work with caring responsibilities.¹⁵

Analysis by Commonwealth Treasury has identified a ‘motherhood penalty’ whereby women experience a 35 per cent reduction in hours of paid work (equal to a 55 per cent reduction in earnings) in the first 5 years following the birth of a child. By contrast, there is no significant long-term impact on male earnings following the arrival of a child.¹⁶

Effective social services and infrastructure — childcare, aged care, disability care and health services — have an important role in providing all Australians with greater choice in how they manage paid work and care.

Rebalancing unpaid work and caring responsibilities, including by promoting and enabling better access to shared parental leave and family caring arrangements, has been shown to support improved outcomes for families and their wellbeing, while supporting greater access for women to participate in paid work.¹⁷ Ultimately, the objective is to minimise barriers to labour force participation so that individuals and families can decide to participate in the workforce in a way that best suits their circumstances.

Access to flexible work arrangements

Access to flexible work arrangements provides women and men with greater choice in how they manage employment, domestic work and care. Flexible work arrangements can include changes to the hours, patterns and locations of work – examples include flexible working hours, part-time work, compressed working hours, telecommuting, job sharing and purchased leave.

Flexible work arrangements can provide women with more opportunities to take on leadership roles, facilitate a more equal sharing of domestic work and unpaid care, promote diversity in the workplace and help break down gender norms.

ABS survey data indicates access to flexible work arrangements is a more important incentive for increasing participation of women than it is for men. The ability to work part time is the most important incentive for increasing participation for women, while finding a job that matches skills and experience is the most important incentive for men.¹⁸

Despite flexible work offerings increasing, research suggests that historically, men have been less likely to request flexible work arrangements and they may face barriers when they do apply for flexible work or leave.¹⁹ Employer reporting under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, indicates that in 2022, only 13 per cent of all paid primary carer’s leave taken was by men.²⁰

¹⁴ ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

¹⁵ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (n.d.) *Gender equality and caring*, WGEA website, accessed May 2023.

¹⁶ Australian Government Dept Treasury (2022) ‘Children and the gender earnings gap’, Treasury Round Up 2022, Treasury website, accessed May 2023.

¹⁷ Deloitte (2021) *Sharing the Load Report*, a report to Westpac New Zealand, Deloitte.

¹⁸ ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

¹⁹ Australian Human Rights Commission (2014) *Supporting Working Parents: Pregnancy and Return to Work National Review*, report to the Australian Government Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

²⁰ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2022) *WGEA Scorecard 2022: The state of gender equality in Australia*, WGEA website, accessed May 2023.

Improving access to flexible work arrangements can drive a more dynamic and responsive labour market and is key to increasing women's participation in the workforce. It may also widen talent pools, improve diversity, enhance the productivity of organisations, and support improved outcomes for families and their wellbeing.^{21,22}

Queensland's *Good people. Good jobs: Queensland Workforce Strategy 2022-2032* highlights the government's ongoing commitment to facilitating women's participation by fostering flexible work practices to widen the pool of available workers.

Access to affordable childcare

ABS survey results indicate almost a quarter of Australian women in 2020–21 who wanted to start a job or preferred to work more hours but were unavailable to do so within 4 weeks identified 'caring for children' as a barrier to increasing workforce participation. This was particularly pronounced for mothers with children under 15 years (56 per cent).

Of Australian mothers who wanted to work more but were unavailable within 4 weeks, 15.7 per cent indicated that childcare affordability is the main reason why childcare is a barrier to participation while 13.7 per cent indicated childcare availability was the main reason. A further 28.7 per cent indicated children being either too young or too old for childcare as the main reason.²³

Through its significant national policy levers, the Australian Government is taking action to help reduce barriers to women's workforce participation by making childcare cheaper and expanding paid parental leave. Further options for improving the affordability and accessibility of early childhood education and care to improve workforce participation (particularly for women) and give families greater choice in how they manage paid work and caring responsibilities, will be considered as part the Australian Productivity Commission's inquiry into Early Childhood Education and Care.

The Queensland Government is also taking action to improve the accessibility and affordability of kindy for Queensland families by investing \$645 million over 4 years to provide 15 hours of free kindergarten per week from 1 January 2024 for all 4-year-old children.

²¹ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2021) *Flexible work post-COVID*, WGEA website, accessed May 2023.

²² Deloitte (2021) *Sharing the Load Report*, a report to Westpac New Zealand, Deloitte.

²³ ABS Barriers and Incentives to Labour Force Participation.

The gender pay gap

The gender pay gap starts early in women's careers and grows over time

The gender pay gap measures the difference between the average full-time earnings of women and men.²⁴

The gender pay gap for full-time employees in Queensland is around 14.6 per cent, compared to the national average of 13.3 per cent (at November 2022). This equates to full-time working women in Queensland earning, on average, \$14,170 less per year than full-time working men.²⁵ Across Australia, the gender pay gap exists from early in women's careers and widens with age across a woman's lifetime.²⁶

Queensland has the second highest gender pay gap of any Australian state or territory, behind Western Australia (22.1 per cent) (Chart 6). As outlined below, the larger gender pay gap in states such as Queensland and Western Australia, compared with other jurisdictions, likely reflects a range of factors including differences in industry structure – including larger mining sectors that have high average earnings and a predominantly male workforce.

The gender pay gap can be calculated using alternative methods. For example, the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA) Employer Census Gender Pay Gap includes total remuneration, part-time and casual employees. Using this measure, the national gender pay gap is even wider (22.8 per cent as at November 2022).



Chart 6: Gender Pay Gap by state and territory, November 2022. Source: ABS Average Weekly Earnings and Queensland Treasury.

Note: For consistency with WGEA reporting, earnings ratios are calculated using seasonally adjusted data.

²⁴ As noted by the ABS, average weekly ordinary-time earnings of full-time adult employees is the most commonly cited measure of the gender pay gap. This measure does not include part-time workers or account for hours worked or overtime earned. Measures which include all employees and total earnings are likely to show a larger pay gap than measures derived using only full-time employees and ordinary-time earnings. Measures using hourly earnings data are likely to show a smaller pay gap than measures derived using weekly or annual earnings.

²⁵ ABS Average Weekly Earnings and Queensland Treasury.

²⁶ Workplace Gender Equality Agency (2023) *Age and the gender pay gap*, WGEA website, accessed May 2023.

What's driving the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is driven by a range of social and economic factors, including wage disparities across industries and occupations, time spent out of the workforce (for example, to care for children), differences in work patterns (for example, part-time work), and gender discrimination and bias (either conscious or unconscious).

A study undertaken by KPMG with the Diversity Council of Australia and WGEA found the main drivers of the gender pay gap in Australia are gender discrimination and bias (accounting for 36 per cent)²⁷, years not working due to interruptions — of which caring for children or other family members is a key aspect (20 per cent), industrial segregation (20 per cent), and part-time employment (11 per cent).²⁸ International evidence also suggests these factors contribute to the gender pay gap.^{29, 30}

Gender discrimination and bias

The gender discrimination component of the gender pay gap materialises in different ways including through the systematic undervaluation of women's economic contribution, the allocation of less visible and less important tasks to women or fewer opportunities for promotion.

Gender discrimination and bias also influences other factors that drive gender pay gaps, such as industrial and occupational segregation. Discrimination is linked to workplace culture and practices including, hiring, promotion and access to training.

Gender discrimination and bias are often driven by gender norms; the conscious or unconscious beliefs and expectations around how people should behave based on their gender. Gender norms and stereotypes can limit women's and men's choices and influence the decisions individuals and organisations make about the jobs and industries that women and men work in and the roles they perform (paid and unpaid).^{31, 32}

Where gender norms stifle the mobility and flexibility of the labour force, and disrupt the appropriate allocation of human capital, they can impede economic growth and productivity.

Challenging gender norms and harmful gender stereotypes is essential to addressing gender inequality and the gender pay gap.

Actions to support such change include promoting women and men in counter stereotypical roles, supporting women into more leadership positions, ensuring women's achievements across a range of fields are recognised, and incentivising people to counter the impact of stereotypical roles (e.g. encouraging men to take up flexible work arrangements).

The Queensland Government is continuing to be an agent for change by being a model employer and prioritising the empowerment and recognition of women across the state.

27 KPMG analysis defines gender discrimination as the part of the gender pay gap that is not able to be explained by factors associated with people's employment, labour force participation, household characteristics and unpaid care and work responsibilities.

28 KPMG (2022) *She's Price(d)less: The Economics of the Gender Pay Gap*, Prepared with Diversity Council Australia (DCA) and the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA), accessed May 2023.

29 European Parliament (2023) *Understanding the gender pay gap: definition and causes*, European Parliament website, accessed May 2023.

30 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018) 'Chapter 6. Starting close, growing apart: Why the gender gap in labour income widens over the working life' in *OECD Employment Outlook 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris, accessed May 2023.

31 Deloitte Access Economics (2022) *Breaking the norm: Unleashing Australia's economic potential*, Deloitte website, accessed May 2023.

32 OECD (2023), *Gender discrimination in social norms: Measuring the invisible*, OECD website, accessed May 2023.

Gender segregation across industries and occupation

Reflecting national trends, Queensland's labour market is highly segregated, with an unequal distribution of men and women working across industries and occupations.

This is particularly visible in female-dominated industries such as healthcare and education (77 per cent and 74 per cent female share of employment) and in male-dominated industries such as construction and mining (14 per cent and 19 per cent female share of employment) (Chart 7).

Despite improvements over time, pay gaps persist across all industries, including those that are female dominated. The gender pay gap in Queensland's most female-dominated industry (health care and social assistance) was 22 per cent in 2022. The only industry with a higher pay gap was the professional services industry (which includes services such as scientific research, accounting, engineering, architectural and legal services) (23 per cent).³³

As well as contributing to the gender pay gap, industry and occupational segregation can make it harder for women and men to switch jobs and industries and can compound labour shortages in highly gendered industries.³⁴

Workers in female-dominated industries tend to be paid less than workers in male-dominated industries

The concentration of women in industries with lower average earnings (for example, healthcare and education) and men in industries with higher average earnings (for example, mining, utilities and construction) contributes to the gender pay gap (Chart 7). The four industries with the highest average weekly earnings in Queensland are all male dominated.

Compared to the rest of Australia, the female-dominated healthcare and social assistance industry and the high-paying male-dominated mining industry account for larger shares of employment in Queensland. This suggests Queensland's industry profile contributes to a higher gender pay gap. This is supported by WGEA analysis which indicates the concentration of men in higher salary sectors and women in sectors with lower pay is a significant driver of Queensland's gender pay gap.³⁵

³³ ABS Average weekly earnings and Queensland Treasury.

³⁴ Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2023) *Occupational gender segregation*, submission to the Employment White Paper, CEDA website, accessed May 2023.

³⁵ Duncan AS, Mavisakalyan A and Salazar S (2022), *Gender Equity Insights 2022: The State of Inequality in Australia*, BCEC|WGEA Gender Equity Series, Issue #7, October 2022.

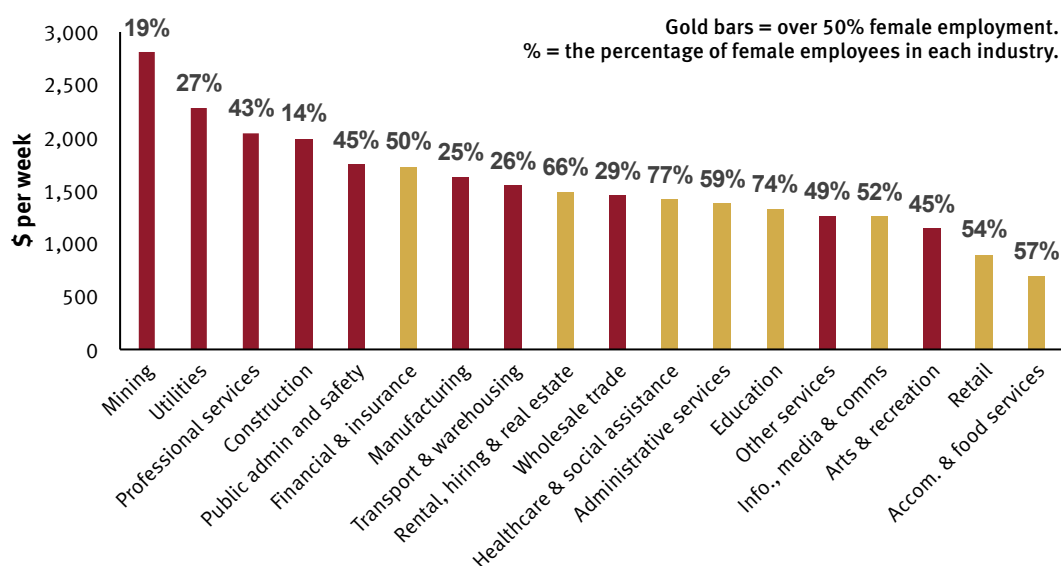


Chart 7: Average weekly earnings by industry and proportion of female employees, Queensland, August 2022.
Source: ABS Survey of Employee Earnings and Hours, Queensland Treasury.

Construction industry snapshot

Some industries have historically been, and still are, characterised by greater gender imbalance towards a male-dominated workforce than others. For example, the construction industry, in both Queensland and Australia, is overwhelmingly male dominated.

While the female share of employment in the broader workforce grew from 37 to 48 per cent between 1985 and 2022, the share of women employed in construction has not improved during the same period, remaining at around 12 to 13 per cent across the 2 years to 2022, broadly similar to the 13.2 per cent recorded in 1985 (Chart 8).

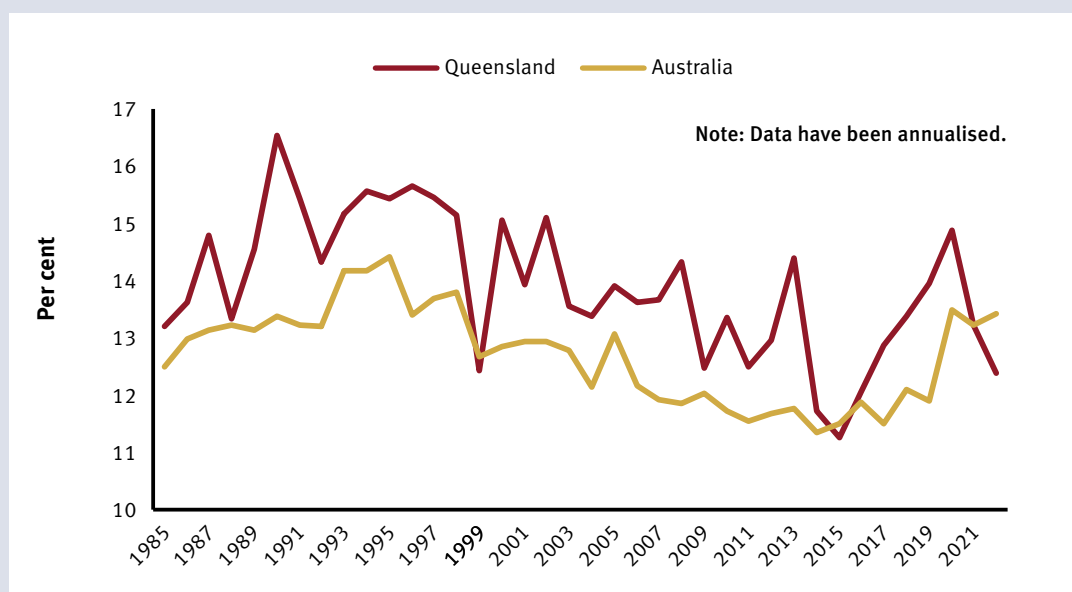


Chart 8: Share of female employees in construction. Source: ABS Labour Force and Queensland Treasury.

Construction industry snapshot cont.

Most women employed in the construction industry work in administrative or clerical roles, with only around 7 per cent working as either tradespersons or engineering professionals.³⁶

There have been some signs of improvement recently, with data collected by the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training indicating the number of women undertaking trades apprenticeships or traineeships in the construction industry almost doubled between 2018 and 2022.³⁷

Even with this growth, however, the cohort remains heavily male dominated, with over 20 young men for every young woman.

In addition, female completion rates in construction apprenticeships have consistently remained below that of male completion rates (Chart 9).

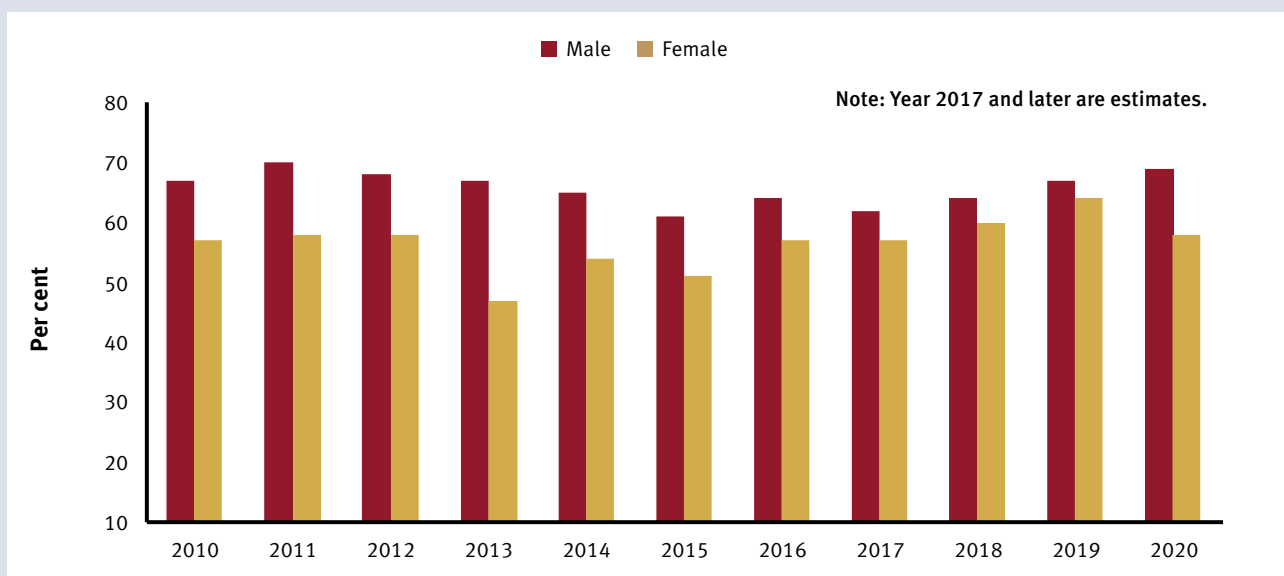


Chart 9: Completion rates in construction apprenticeship by sex, Queensland. Source: Construction Skills Queensland.

The Queensland Government is working to close this gap by supporting women in construction. The government has committed to the 11 per cent participation target of the National Association for Women in Construction and the Queensland Government's builder, QBuild, is well above the state average in employing females. In April 2023, 20 per cent of QBuild's apprentice workforce was female.

The Australian Government is also establishing a National Construction Industry Forum to address issues including gender equity in the industry.

³⁶ ABS Census 2021 and Queensland Treasury.

³⁷ Queensland Government Dept of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training (2022) VET Annual Summary Apprentice and trainee participation activity data and statistics and Queensland Treasury.

Women are underrepresented in senior leadership and managerial roles

Despite improvements over the last three decades, and growing evidence of the benefits of female representation in leadership roles, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership roles across almost all Australian industries.

In 2022, women accounted for around 28 per cent of ‘Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators’ in Queensland. The share of ‘Managers’ who are female has grown from around 30 per cent in 2000 to around 40 per cent in 2022 in both Queensland and Australia.³⁸

According to the Chief Executive Women Senior Executive Census 2022, the progress of women’s representation into senior leadership roles across Australia’s private sector has been slow, and in 2022, representation went backwards. Only 50 ASX300 companies had gender balanced senior leadership teams, and 46 ASX300 companies had no women in their executive leadership team (up from 44 in 2021).

There was also a drop in the number of women chief financial officers in 2022, which is a pathway into chief executive appointment. Further, the number of women chief executives in the ASX200 grew only 2 per cent, from 11 in 2017 to just 14 women in 2022.³⁹

Increasing the participation and representation of women in leadership positions has been linked to improved organisational performance, productivity, and profitability. Research from WGEA and the Bankwest Curtin Economics Centre suggests an increase of 10 percentage points or more in the share of female key management personnel leads to a 6.6 per cent increase in the market value of ASX companies.⁴⁰

There is a growing body of domestic and international evidence demonstrating the economic benefits of diverse leadership, which include improving productivity, innovation, and employee retention.^{41, 42, 43}

Factors contributing to women’s underrepresentation in leadership positions can include bias, discrimination and stereotypes about what leadership looks like, a lack of flexible working arrangements (and perceptions that those seeking flexible work are less committed), and women having fewer business connections.

³⁸ ABS Labour Force and Queensland Treasury.

³⁹ Chief Executive Women (2022) *CEW Senior Executive Census 2022*, CEW website, accessed May 2023.

⁴⁰ Cassells R and Duncan A (2020) ‘Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes’, *BCEC: WGEA Gender Equity Series*, Issue #5, March 2020, accessed May 2023.

⁴¹ McKinsey & Company (2018) *Delivering through diversity*, McKinsey website, accessed May 2023.

⁴² Deloitte Access Economics (2017) *Westpac Diversity Dividend Report*, a report to Westpac Banking Corporation, accessed May 2023.

⁴³ Deloitte Access Economics (2022) *Breaking the norm, Unleashing Australia’s economic potential*, a report produced in partnership with Australians Investing in Women, accessed May 2023.

Women in business

There is a persistent gap in the proportion of women and men as owner-managers in Queensland and Australia, with women continuing to remain underrepresented compared to men. In April 2023, the female rate of self-employment was 6.3 percentage points lower than for males in Queensland, and 7.9 percentage points lower in the rest of Australia. In Queensland, women accounted for 37.8 per cent of owner managers, compared to 34.9 per cent for the rest of Australia.⁴⁴

Research suggests key challenges contributing to women's underrepresentation as business owners and entrepreneurs compared to men include women's lack of access to both formal business support networks and to the capital required to start and finance a business, and their typically greater family responsibilities.⁴⁵

A recent survey of over 600 Australian women-owned, women-led small businesses, conducted by the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman's office, found 43 per cent of respondents identify access to capital as a central barrier to growth.⁴⁶

In most countries, women are less likely than men to report that they can access the financing needed to start a business, and women entrepreneurs are more reliant on self-financing compared to men. According to the OECD, common policy approaches to address this include offering grants, loan guarantees, microfinance and improving access to risk capital for women entrepreneurs with growth-oriented businesses.⁴⁷



⁴⁴ ABS Labour force and Queensland Treasury.

⁴⁵ Rose A (2019) *The Allison Rose Review of Female Entrepreneurship*, a report to Her Majesty's Treasury, UK Government, Treasury website, accessed May 2023.

⁴⁶ Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman (2022) *Access to capital still a barrier for women-led small businesses*, accessed May 2023.

⁴⁷ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2017) *Do women have equal access to finance for their business?* OECD website, accessed May 2023.

Women in the Queensland public sector

The Queensland Government is leading the way through its commitment to supporting gender equality across the public service.

More than two-thirds of public sector employees are women, and the Queensland public sector gender pay gap has reduced from 12.58 per cent in 2014 to 7.64 per cent in 2022.

Reflecting the government's focus on increasing representation and support for women at all levels, particularly in leadership roles, the proportion of women in leadership roles in the Queensland public sector was 51 per cent in 2022.

More than two-thirds

69%

of public sector employees
are women

A lower gender pay gap[^]

7.6%

down from 12.6% in 2014

Just over half

51% OF PUBLIC
SECTOR
LEADERSHIP ROLES
are held by women

(Senior officer, senior executive
and chief executive levels)

42%

of senior executive equivalent
roles and above are
held by women

As outlined in the *Queensland Women's Strategy 2022–27*, the Special Commissioner, Equity and Diversity, is applying a comprehensive approach to achieve equity across the public service which will improve conditions, job security, and career pathways for women at all levels, in all agencies and across all occupational groups.

The Queensland Government is committed to equal representation on government boards, having first set gender equity targets for government boards in 2015. The targets required that by 2020, 50 per cent of all new board appointees must be women and there must be 50 per cent representation of women across all boards. Both targets were achieved ahead of time in September 2019. As at 30 September 2021, 54 per cent of all members on Queensland Government boards were female (compared to 31 per cent in 2015).

Building on this momentum, the Queensland Women's Strategy is committed to encouraging non-government sectors to follow the Queensland Government's lead by setting targets for women in leadership positions and women on boards.

[^]The Queensland Public Sector Commission calculates the gender pay gap using earnings which reflect employees' full-time earnings regardless of whether the employee works part-time.

Women's economic security in retirement

The gender pay gap, in combination with lower participation and other labour market outcomes, contributes to economic inequality for women over the course of their lives and contributes to lower wealth accumulation.

These factors place women at significantly increased risk of financial hardship during retirement.⁴⁸ In 2019–20, the average gap between male and female superannuation account balances in Queensland was around 21.1 per cent (the average superannuation balance was \$132,097 for women and \$167,516 for men). Across all age groups, women were more likely than men to have no superannuation coverage.⁴⁹

Financial hardship during retirement may also contribute to housing insecurity among older women. Reflecting similar trends across Australia, Census data suggests that the number of older women among Queensland's homeless grew significantly between 2016 and 2021.

While the majority of homeless⁵⁰ persons in 2021 in Queensland were male (56 per cent), the number of homeless men in Queensland declined from 2016 to 2021. In contrast, the number of homeless women grew 10 per cent, and the number of homeless women aged 65 and over grew by 20 per cent over the period. (Chart 10).

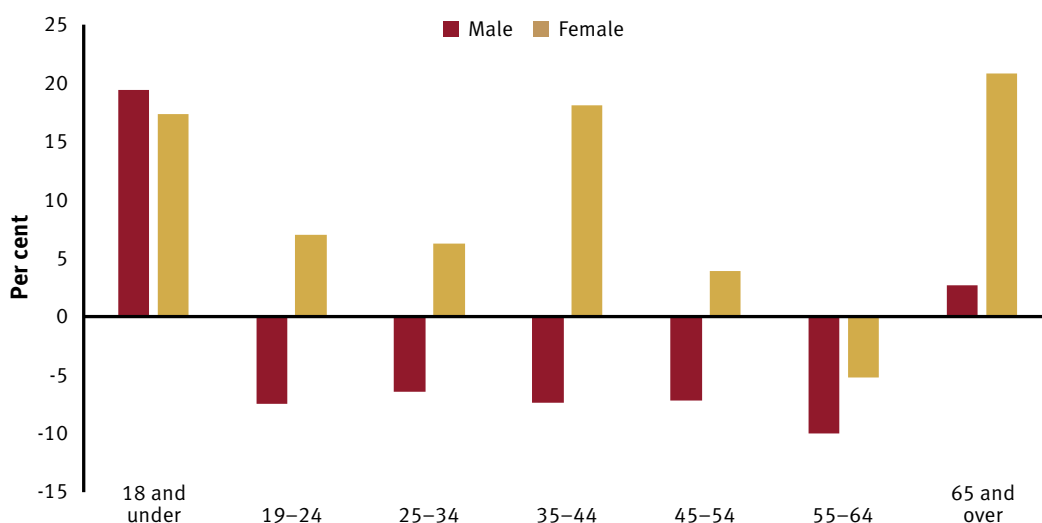


Chart 10: Change in the number of homeless Queenslanders, by sex and age, 2016 to 2021.

Source: ABS Censuses 2016, ABS Census 2021 and Queensland Treasury.

⁴⁸ Committee for Economic Development of Australia (2022) *The Gender Wealth Gap is a Critical Barrier to Australia's Economic Growth*, CEDA website, accessed May 2023.

⁴⁹ Queensland Government Dept of Justice and Attorney-General (2022) *Queensland Women's Strategy Gender Equality Report Cards 2022*, DJAG website, accessed May 2023.

⁵⁰ Homeless is defined to include persons living in improvised dwellings, supported accommodation for the homeless, overcrowded dwellings and temporary accommodation.



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"Rich history, thriving future." artwork
by David Williams of Gilimbaa.

