



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY
—
Business School

Gender Equality @ Work Index

Index Report, November 2025



**Measuring Gender Equality
at Work in Australia**

**The Australian Centre
for Gender Equality and
Inclusion @ Work**

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.



Dale Harding, *Spine 3 (radiance)*, 2018.
Carslaw Building, Camperdown Campus.

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Foreword

Despite decades of effort by government, employers, unions and education institutions, gender inequalities are an intractable feature of the Australian labour market. Stubborn gaps in participation, pay and career progression are holding women, business, and the national economy back. Many of the unequal features of the Australian labour market, such as the concentration of men and women in different industries and occupations, have barely shifted in three decades.

Progress has been made in recent years, with data collected by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency informing action to reduce some workplace and labour market gender gaps. However, there is much more work to do.

Understanding and addressing gender gaps requires a nuanced examination of the differences in men's and women's labour market experiences. This includes not only pay disparities but also variations in hours worked, job locations and intensity, and workplace experiences.

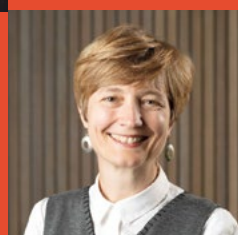
The Gender Equality @ Work Index, developed by the Australian Centre for Gender Equality and Inclusion @ Work at the University of Sydney, offers a comprehensive, national, and longitudinal snapshot of gender equality at work. It provides insights for the community, policymakers, and employers on Australia's progress and highlights areas requiring urgent action to address the root causes of inequality.

We thank the many supporters and partners who contributed to the development of this Index. We hope it sparks informed debate and, most importantly, drives action to address gender inequality at work.

The Australian Centre for Gender Equality and Inclusion @ Work



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The Australian Centre for Gender Equality and Inclusion @ Work, at The University of Sydney is Australia's leading research centre on women's workforce participation, careers and the intersection of work and care.

Advised by a panel of Australia's industry leaders, the Centre delivers research-informed insights into the drivers of gender inequality at work and develops evidence-based strategies for governments and industry to foster gender-equal workplaces for all Australians.

Why gender equality at work matters



Improved attraction and retention:

Companies with higher levels of gender diversity have lower turnover and higher retention among women employees (Holmes et al., 2021).



The right & fair thing to do:

Gender equality is a fundamental human right that helps create a peaceful and sustainable economy and society (UN Women & UN DESA, 2025).



Greater innovation:

Inclusive and gender-diverse business cultures are associated with greater creativity and innovation (DiTomaso et al., 2007).



Boost labour supply:

Innovative practices that build gender equality will boost women's labour force participation and strengthen overall economic growth (Duncan et al., 2024; Jobs and Skills Australia, 2023).



Increase in market value:

An increase of 10 percentage points or more in the share of female Key Management Personnel leads to a 6.6% increase in the market value of Australian ASX-listed companies (WGEA & BCEC, 2020).

The Gender Equality @ Work Index

What is it?

The Gender Equality @ Work (GE@W) Index offers a comprehensive, national and longitudinal snapshot of gender equality at work.

What does it do?

It provides insights for the community, policymakers and employers on progress, and highlights areas requiring urgent action to address the root causes of inequality.

What comes next?

The research team is now focused on developing the next innovative and action-oriented applications of the GE@W Index. These will enable point-in-time snapshots, track progress over time, and provide deeper insights into change across the seven dimensions that make up the Index.

In Australia, the GE@W Index will generate insights across states and territories, industries, workforce groups and, in time, organisations. Internationally, we are developing collaborations with multilaterals, governments and research institutions to create a tool for comparative analysis that builds global understanding of how gender equality at work is experienced and realised in different contexts.

Partner with us

As we expand the GE@W Index, apply it in new settings and explore future directions, we invite collaboration, investment and partnership to help inform and drive progress toward gender equality at work.

TRACKS REAL BEHAVIOUR

The Index is built on real behaviour and implementation, not just laws and policy settings. It complements other data sets by focusing on the 'last mile' of gender equity: what's actually happening in workplaces.

IS DIAGNOSTIC

The Index doesn't just measure gaps, it identifies where interventions for change are most urgently needed.

It serves as a diagnostic tool to identify areas where gender equality is stalled, and highlights where additional action and investment could drive improvements.

Dimensions of measurement in the Gender Equality @ Work Index



Dimension	Measure Are men and women equal in...?
 Participation	Labour force participation Employment underutilisation
 Pay	Hourly earnings Weekly earnings
 Hours	Working hours Domestic work hours Parental leave
 Stratification	Representation in lower paid jobs Employment in senior and executive roles Working in jobs below skill level
 Segmentation	Employment across industries Employment across occupations
 Security	Casual employment Income stability
 Safety	Sexual harassment at work Workplace injury

The Index measures the current state of gender equality at work in Australia and tracks changes over time.

It assesses the gender gap across **seven key dimensions of workplace gender equality**, using at least two measures for each dimension. These dimensions are informed by academic evidence on the drivers of labour market outcomes for Australian women and men.

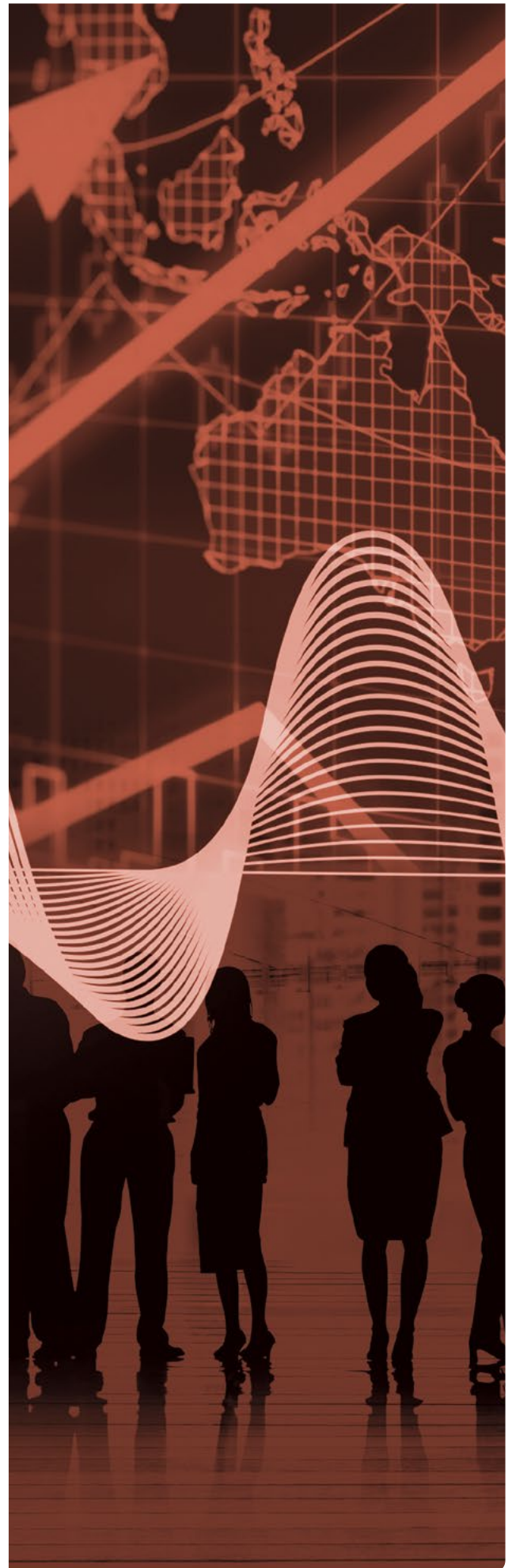
Each measure is calculated by **comparing the outcomes of women and men** and is expressed as either a parity ratio or a dissimilarity measure that show how close women and men are to being equal.

The Index and each dimension is expressed as a value between 0 and 100 where **100 indicates equality between women and men**. The lower the score, the further Australia is from gender equality at work.

The Index is constructed using measures derived **from large-scale, publicly available and nationally representative data that are collected regularly**. Data used in the Index is from 2014–2024.

The Index provides governments, businesses, unions and the community with a **reliable annual measure** of how Australia is progressing on gender equality at work, and change over time. It serves as a **diagnostic tool** to identify areas where gender equality is stalled and highlights where additional action and investment could drive improvements.

See appendix for details



A snapshot of gender equality now

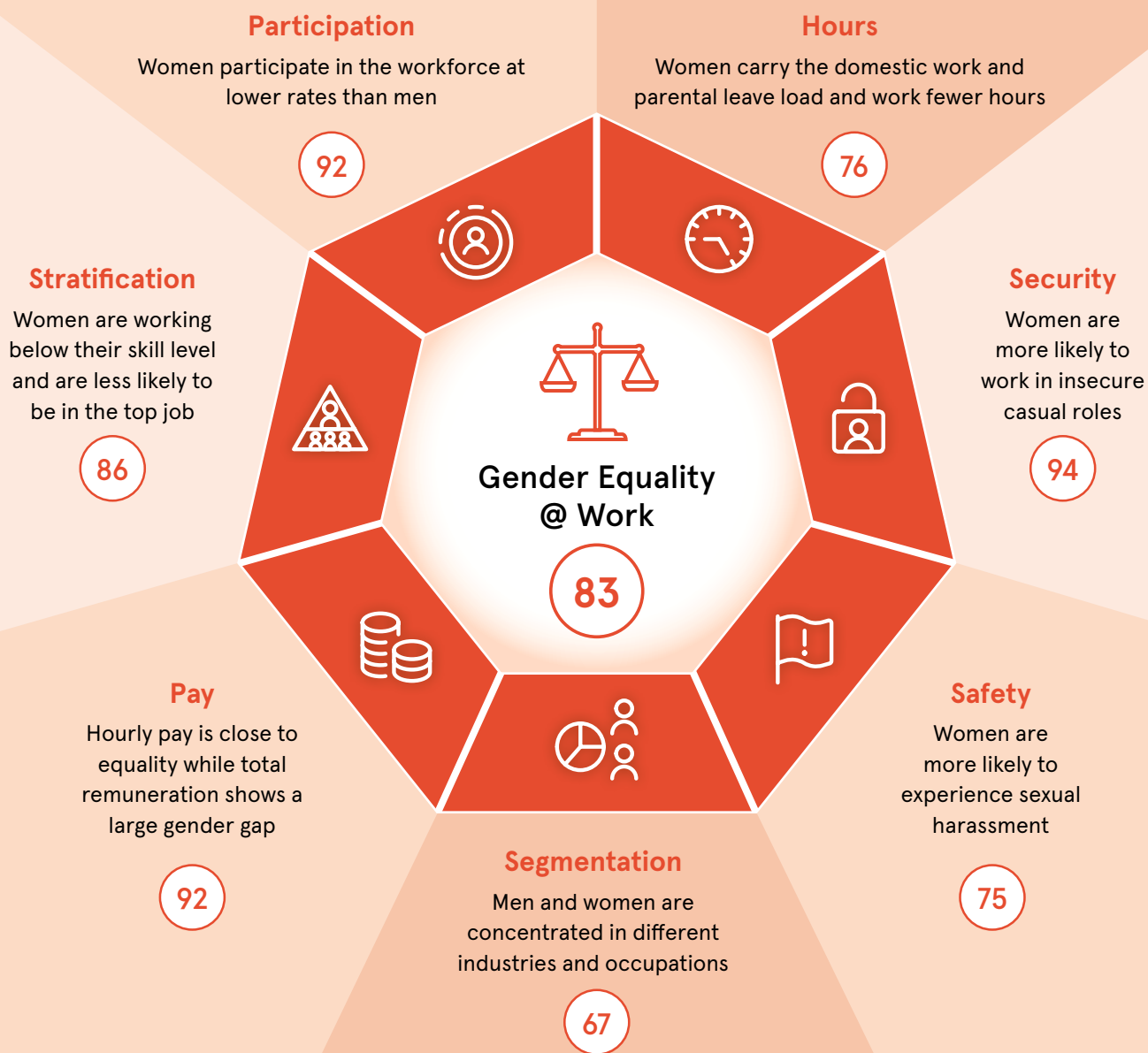
Women and men in Australia experience different opportunities and rewards from work. Despite having higher levels of Bachelor-level education than men, women participate in the labour market at a lower rate, work fewer hours, are employed in lower-paid jobs, experience greater insecurity and are less safe at work.

According to the Gender Equality @ Work score of 83

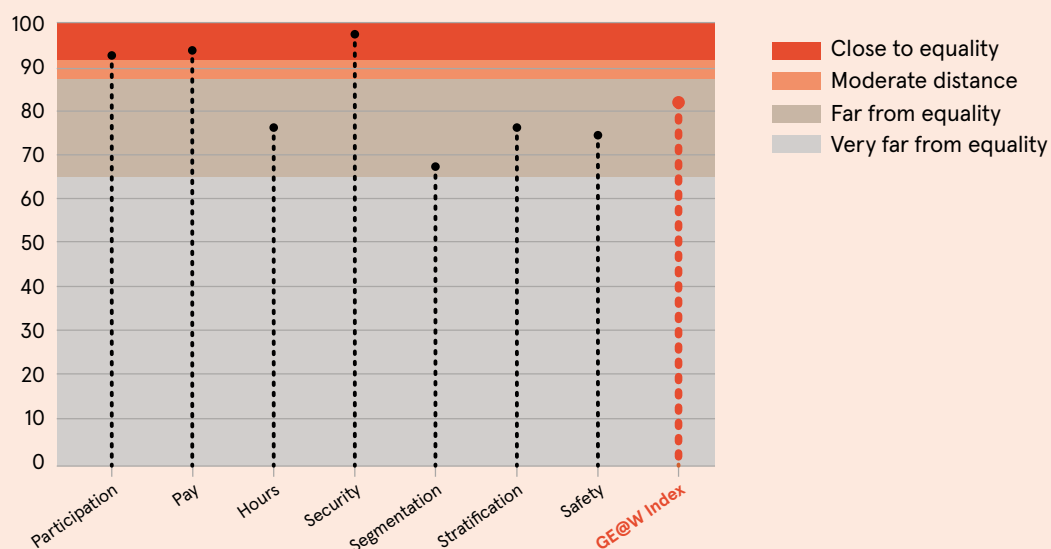
Australia is 17 points away from achieving gender equality at work.

Gender equality is improving but progress is slow. In the last 10 years, gender equality at work has improved by just 3 points.

The Gender Equality @ Work Index: A snapshot



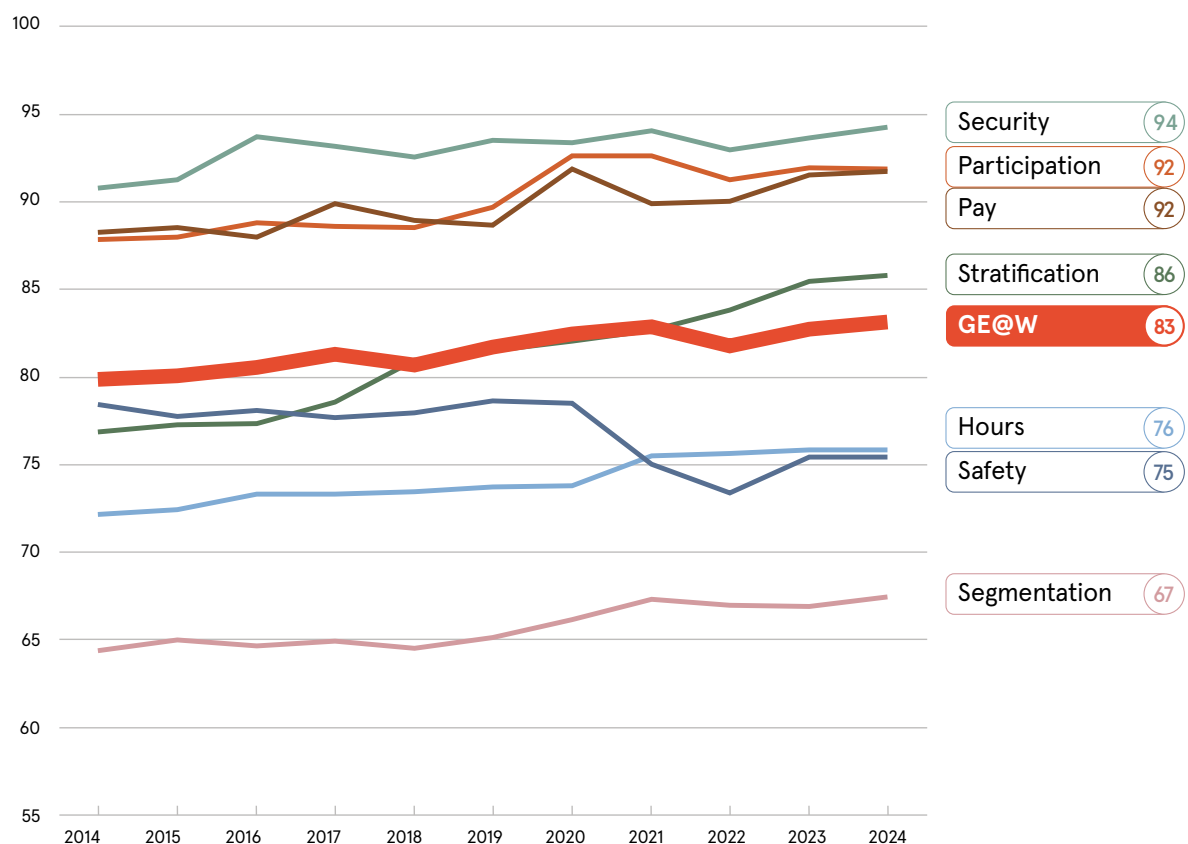
Gender equality @ Work scores: Distance to equality



Index results

Gender equality at work has improved by 3 points since 2014, driven by gains across most dimensions but held back by rising inequality in safety at work

Gender Equality @ Work Index 2014-2024



Australian women and men do not enjoy equal outcomes from work. The Index score of 83 shows Australia is 17 points from achieving gender equality at work.

Women and men are closer to equality in areas like **Participation**, **Pay**, and **Security**.

Important inequalities remain in **Segregation**, **Stratification**, **Time**, and **Safety**.

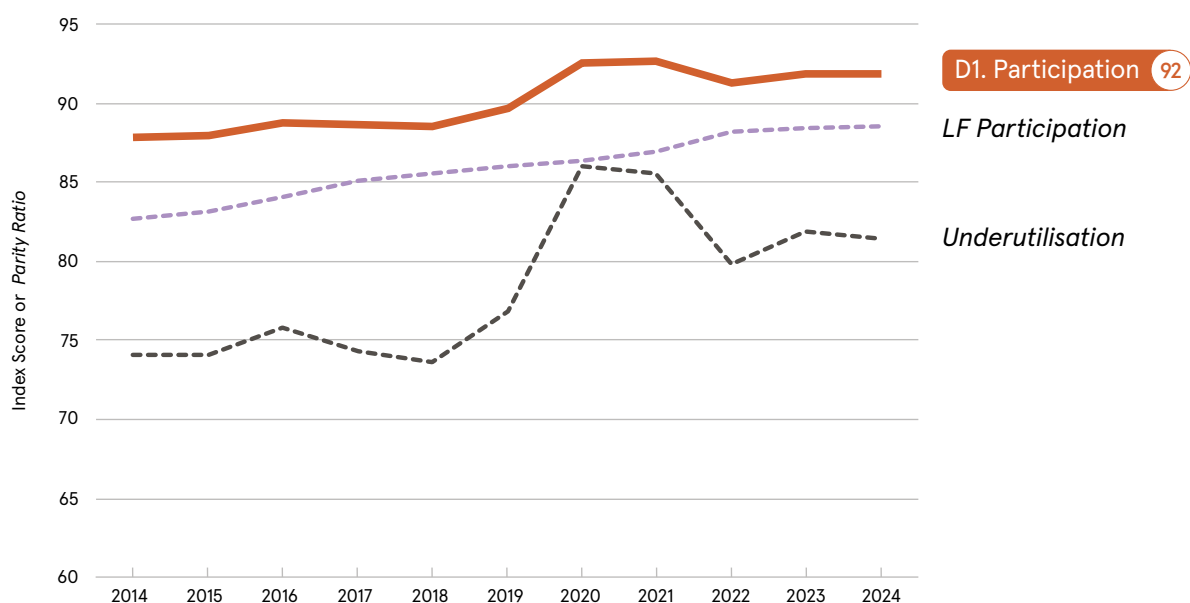
- Women and men are still concentrated in different jobs and industries.
- Career opportunities and progression remain unequal for women and men.
- Women continue to face higher risks of workplace sexual harassment than men.
- Women continue to perform the majority of unpaid care work, limiting their opportunities for participation and advancement in the labour market.

Dimension 1

Participation

Improvements in women's labour force participation and underutilisation rates are narrowing the gap between men and women's economic opportunities

Gender Equality @ Work Index – Dimension 1 Participation



Note: measured as F/M ratio of labour force participation, M/F underutilisation ratio.

Source: ABS Labour Force Survey

Since 2014, gender equality in participation has improved by 4 points to equal a score of 92. This is 8 points below equality with men.

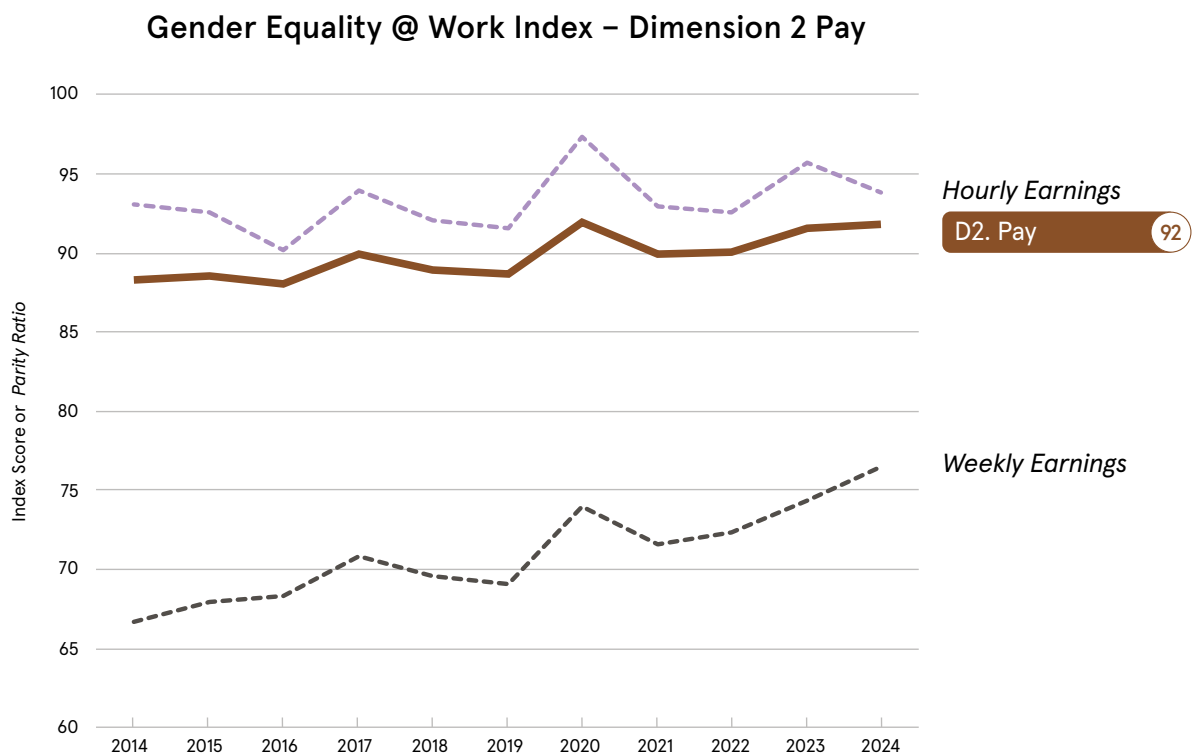
In 2014 just 58.6% of women participated in the labour force compared to 70.9% of men. By 2024 the participation rate for women had increased to 62.9% while for men it had grown slowly to 71.0%. This has seen participation rates between men and women converge, but still 12 points below a position of equality. This is constraining the economic potential and security of women.

Underutilisation has declined for women more than for men over the past ten years (4 percentage points compared to 2 percentage points), seeing the gap between men and women narrow.

Dimension 2

Pay

However, women continue to face significant inequality in total remuneration received from work



Note: measured as F/M ratio of hourly earnings, F/M ratio of weekly earnings

Source: ABS Characteristics of Employment

Since 2014 gender equality in pay has improved by 4 points to equal a score of 92. This is 8 points below equality with men.

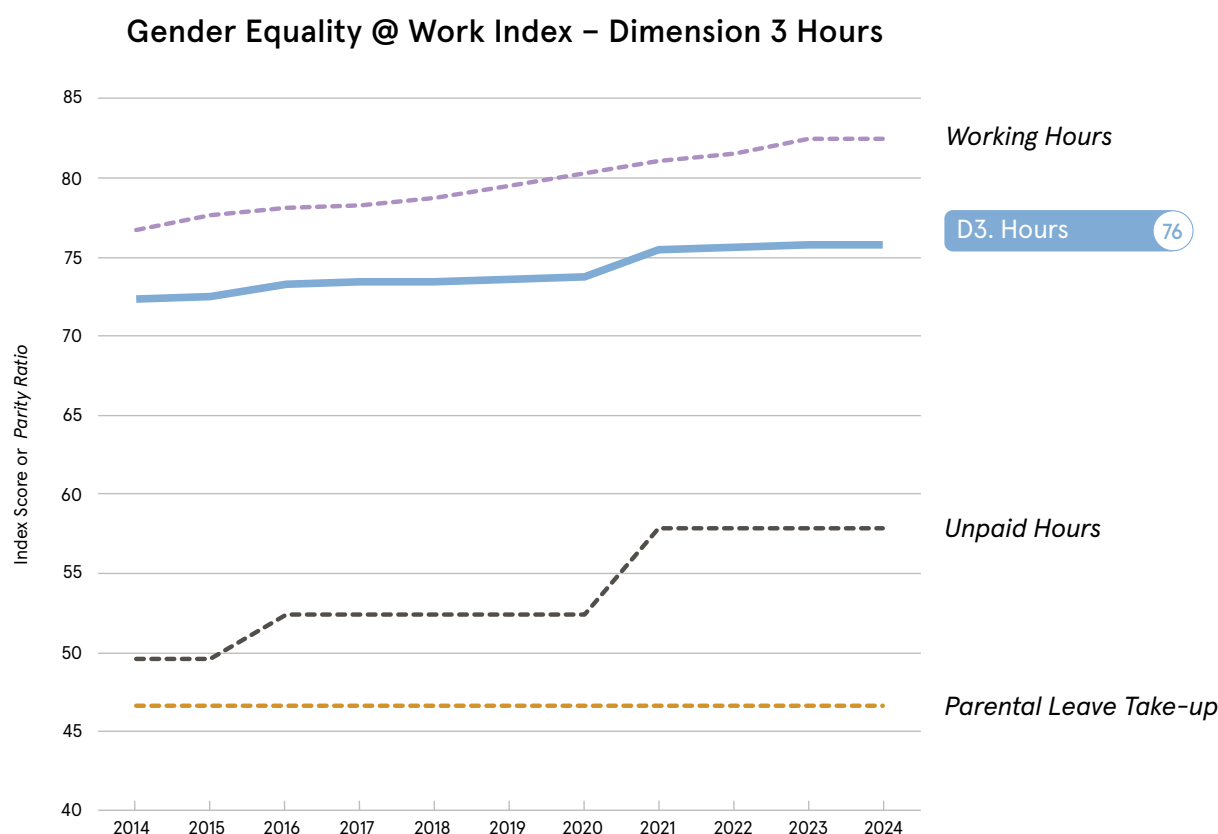
There has been considerable focus on the gender pay gap as a critical measure of gender inequality at work. In 2014 women earned on average \$30.8 per hour worked, compared to \$33.1 for men. By 2024, the gap in hourly earnings has improved slightly, with hourly rates for men and women in the same jobs almost equal.

Hourly pay is close to equality due to equal pay requirements. However, there is considerable inequality in total remuneration, where men earn higher bonuses, overtime and additional payments, and as a result women make 76 cents for every dollar men make.

Dimension 3

Hours

Inequalities persist in the total hours men and women work due to women carrying the brunt of the unpaid care and paid parental leave load



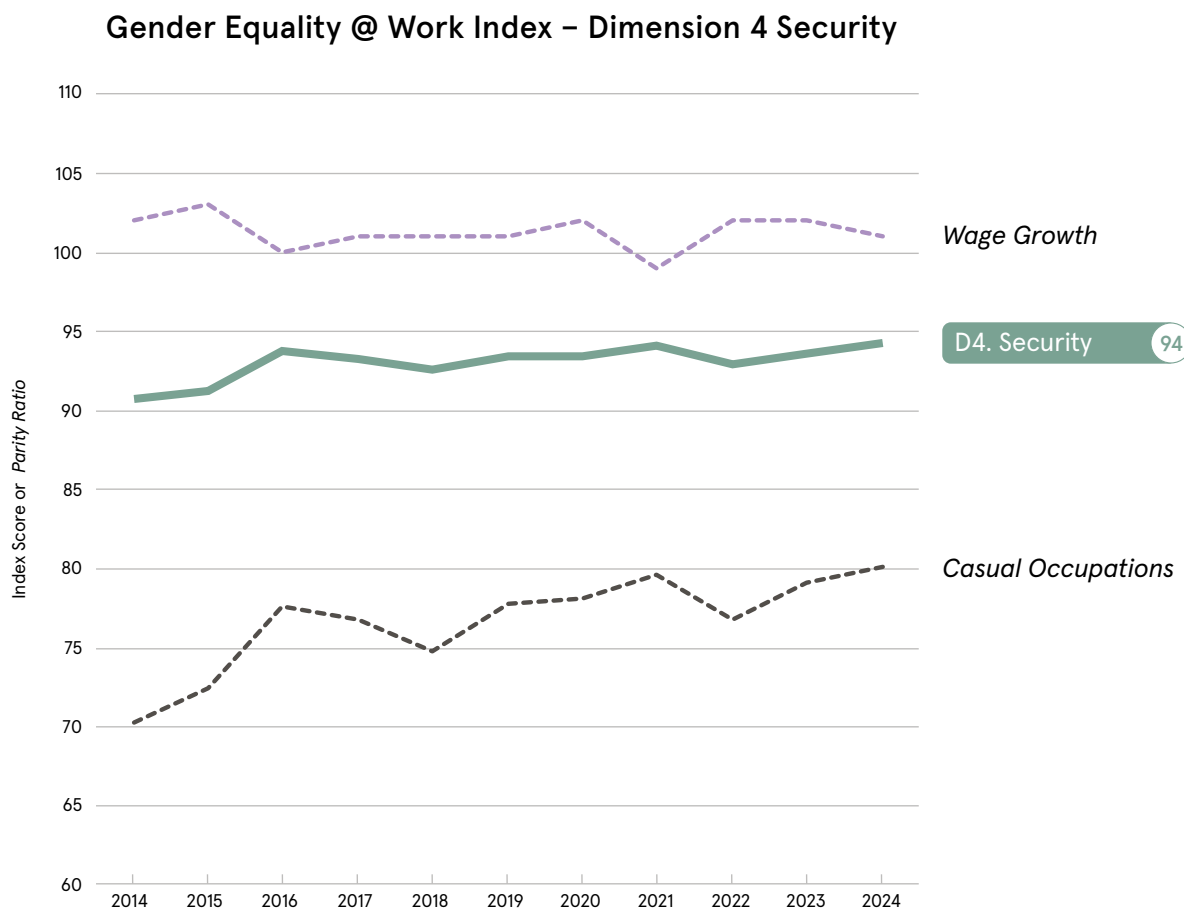
Since 2014 gender equality in working hours has improved by 4 points to equal a score of 76. This is 24 points below equality with men.

Working hours equality has increased mainly due to an increase in the number of hours worked by women since 2014 (up from 30.1 hours per week in 2014 to 32.4 hours in 2024) and a decrease in the number of hours worked by men (40.6 hours in 2014 to 39.1 in 2024). Equality in unpaid domestic hours is improving due to an increase in men's contribution from 6.6 hours to 6.9 hours per week and a decrease in women's contribution from 12.5 to 11.9 hours

between 2016 and 2021. Persistent differences in the unpaid workload shapes opportunities in the paid labour force. It is difficult to address workforce inequalities, especially segregation and stratification, without a more equal distribution of unpaid care and domestic work. Low uptake of parental leave by men continues to be a major cause of gender inequality at home & in the workplace.

Dimension 4 Security

Women are more likely to face insecure work, concentrated in lower paid casual jobs



Note: measured as M/F ratio of casual occupations, F/M ratio of wage growth

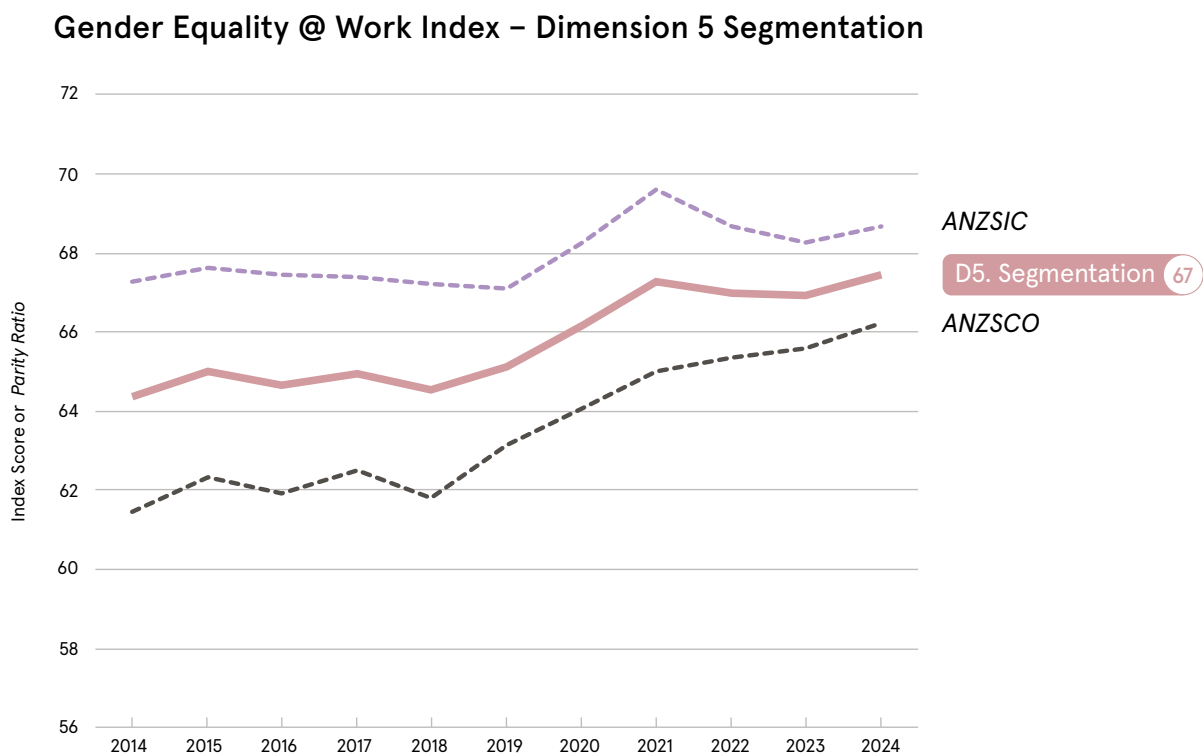
Source: ABS Characteristics of Employment, ABS Average Weekly Earnings

Since 2014 gender equality in economic security has improved 3 points to 94. This is 6 points below equality with men.

Women are more likely than men to be employed in casual jobs with limited access to leave entitlements such as sick leave and carers leave, reduced investment in learning and development opportunities, and restricted labour market rights. Less secure, lower-paid casual work is a major contributor to the gender pay gap and productivity loss. Income stability is similar for men and women.

Dimension 5 Segmentation

Men and women are concentrated in different industries and occupations



Note: measured as Inverse dissimilarity across ANZSIC groups,
Inverse dissimilarity across ANZSCO groups

Source: ABS Labour Force

Since 2014 gender equality in labour market segmentation has improved by 3 points to a score of 67. This is 33 points below equality.

Divergent educational pathways, unequal sharing of domestic work, limited access to high quality flexible work, poor retention of women in male dominated jobs and social norms and expectations drive gender segregation in occupations and industries.

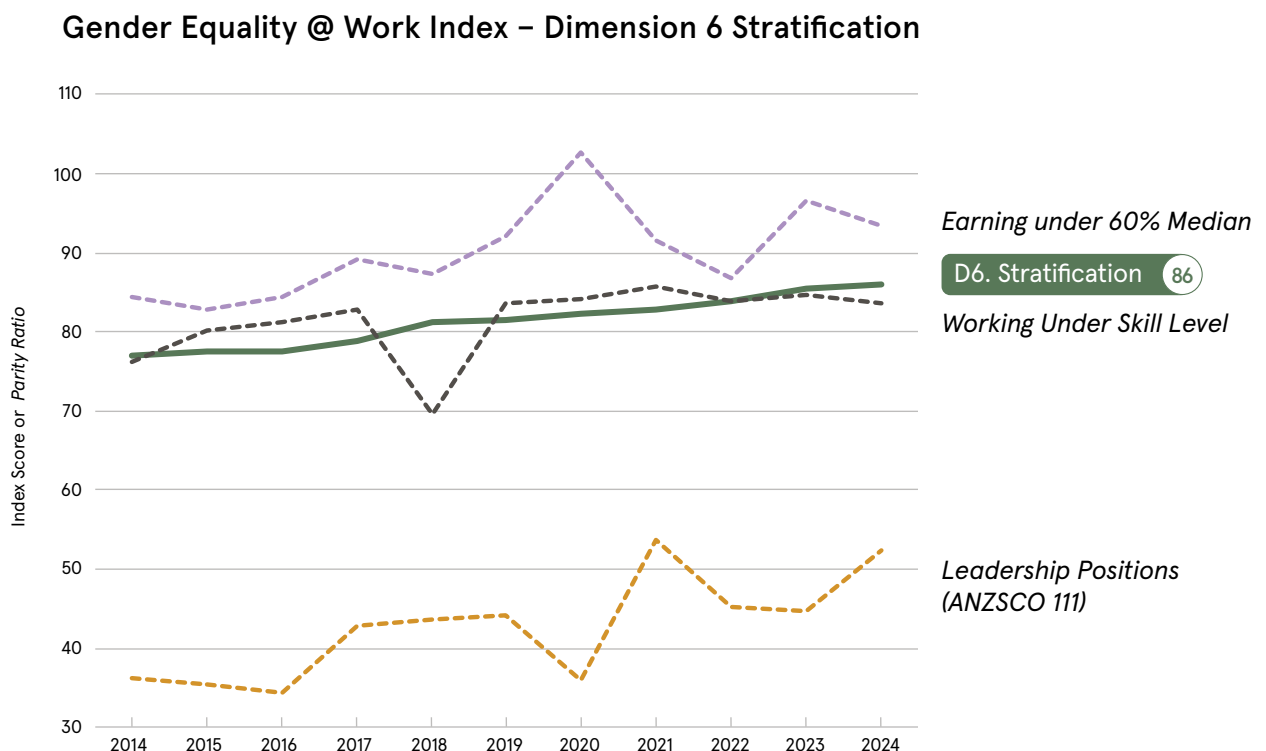
For example, in occupations, 85% of technicians and trade workers are men, while 70% of community and personal

service workers are women. Industry segregation mirrors this trend, with approximately 88% of the construction industry workforce being male, and women making up 78% of the health care and social assistance workforce.

Male-dominated occupations pay 16% more on average than female-dominated ones, further impacting women's economic potential and deepening inequality.

Dimension 6 Stratification

Employment insecurity and segmented labour markets make it difficult for women to progress to high paying, high responsibility roles



Note: measured as Ratio of M/F earning below 60% median hourly earnings, F/M ratio of ANZSCO 111 (Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators), M/F ratio of working below skill level

Source: ABS Characteristics of Employment, ABS Labour Force

Since 2014 gender equality in labour market stratification has improved by 9 points to a score of 86.

Australia's economic potential and productivity are being constrained by workforce stratification, including inequality between men and women in workforce levels, board representation, and income.

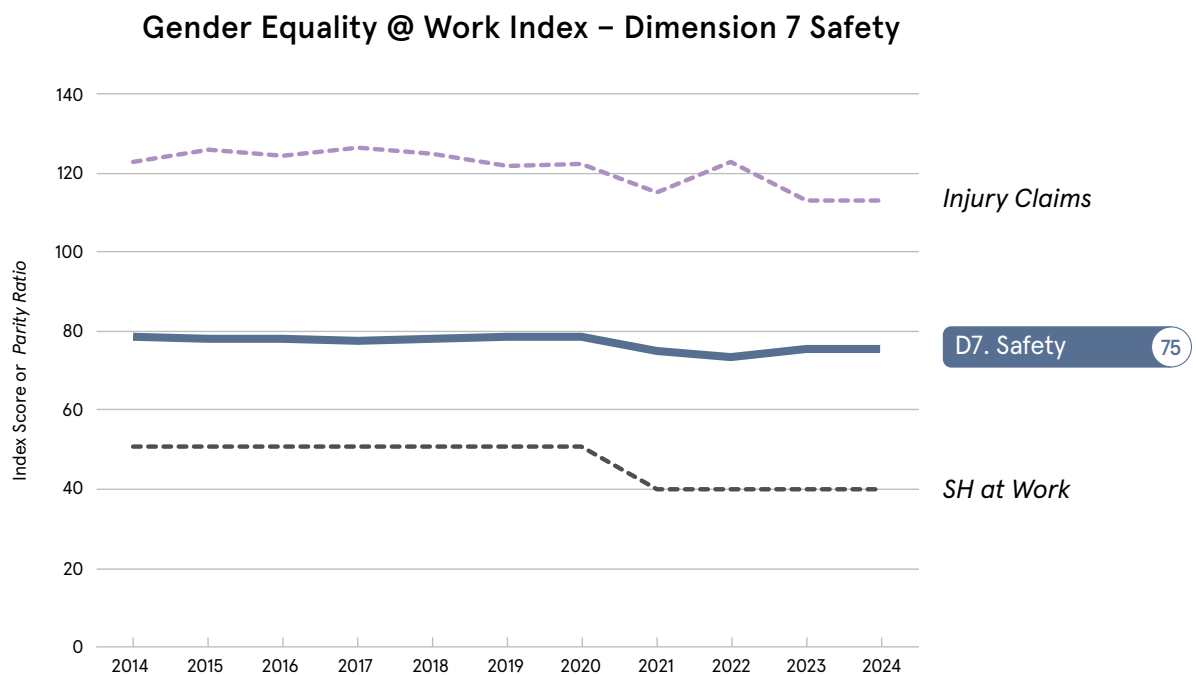
Out of every 10 women working below their skills level, only 8 men are working below. This reflects a significant inequality and productivity loss.

Inequality is exacerbated as women move up the career ladder. Despite rapid improvement (up 11 points in the last ten years), there is just 1 female CEO for every 3 male CEOs. Even when women reach the level of CEO, they earn \$158,632 less than men per year.

Inequality also exists at the lower levels of income. There are more women than men who earn below 60% of the median income, meaning women dominate lower-income level occupations.

Dimension 7 Safety

The workplace is less safe for women than men undermining women's economic security



Note: measured as M/F ratio of sexual harassment at work, M/F Parity ratio of injury claims at work

Source: ABS Personal Safety Survey, SafeWork Australia

Gender equality in safety at work sits at a score of 75, down 3 points from 2014 and a long way from equality of outcomes with men.

Men and women face different types of safety issues at work. Men experience greater rates of injury than women while women report facing higher rates of sexual harassment at work than men. More than 40% of women compared with 26% of men have experienced workplace sexual harassment in the past five years according to the Australian Human Rights Commission. This costs the Australian economy more than \$3.8 billion a year.

The Sex Discrimination Act 1984 made workplace sexual harassment (WHS) unlawful, and in 2022, the Government introduced a 'positive duty' requiring employers to take proactive action to prevent it. WHS laws, which have protected workers for decades, remain vital for safe and equitable workplaces. Together, these measures demonstrate Australia's commitment to fairness and safety at work.

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Appendix

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Index explainer

Questions	Answers
What is an Index? Why have you used it?	An index is a composite numerical value that simplifies complex information, making it easier to understand or compare differences. It is particularly useful for measuring changes over time or disparities between groups in a concise and standardised way.
How should I interpret the Index?	In this report, an Index score of 100 indicates complete equality between men and women in a specific dimension. This also applies when looking at single indicators. For example, in the dimension of pay, a score of 50 signifies significant inequality, with women and men being far from parity.
What is a parity ratio?	A parity ratio compares two values to determine their relative equality or inequality. In this context, it measures how close men and women are to achieving equality across different dimensions.
Why do you change the way parity ratios are expressed? i.e. male to female or female to male?	The way parity ratios are expressed is standardised for consistency. All parity ratios are presented such that scores below 100 indicate women are less equal than men.
What is a dissimilarity ratio?	A dissimilarity ratio quantifies the degree of difference or inequality between two groups. It highlights disparities in distribution between men and women.
Why have you used a mix of parity ratios and dissimilarity measures?	The selected measures capture various dimensions of gender inequality. Parity ratios indicate how close men and women are to equality in areas such as pay or workforce participation. Dissimilarity indices highlight differences in how men and women are distributed across categories, such as industries or occupations, shedding light on segregation. Combined, these measures offer a comprehensive view of gender inequality.
Why have you not included other measures of gender inequality?	This Index focuses specifically on gender equality in the workplace. The indicator selection was informed by systematic reviews of gender equality and job quality indicators. Only dimensions supported by robust, reliable, and longitudinal data are included to ensure accuracy and comparability.
Have you weighted the different components of the Index equally?	Each dimension is calculated as an equally weighted average of its indicators, and the overall Index is the equally weighted average of the seven dimensions. We tested alternative weighting schemes through simulations, and the results show that different weightings would not substantially change the findings.
Why have you included measures that do not have a 10-year historical series/annual data?	Some measures are included despite limited historical data due to their critical importance in understanding women's experiences at work. These measures are expected to have more comprehensive data available in the future.
Why are the pay gap results different to WGEA?	The WGEA gender pay gap reporting is based on data from private organisations with over 100 employees, covering approximately one-third of the labour market and (until recently) excluding the highly feminised public sector in the period of 2014-2024. In contrast, this Index uses data covering the labour market as a whole, looking at both hourly wages and weekly earnings (the latter incl. of salary, bonuses, shift and other allowances, but not overtime payments).
Why have you not included other demographic characteristics in the Index?	This Index focuses on gender equality at work as a first step, offering detailed insights into inequality in the workplace. While other characteristics like cultural background, disability, and age are important, expanding to an intersectional approach requires more robust data to provide better insights for stakeholders. Future work will build on this foundation to explore these intersections.

Measures, Metrics and Data Sources

Dimension	Measure Are men and women equal in...?	Metric How is this calculated?	Data source
Participation	Labour force participation	Female to male labour force participation ratio	ABS Labour Force
	Underutilisation	Male to female underutilisation ratio	ABS Labour Force
Pay	Hourly earnings	Female to male hourly earnings ratio	ABS Characteristics of Employment
	Weekly earnings	Female to male weekly earnings ratio	ABS Characteristics of Employment
Hours	Working hours	Female to male working hours ratio	ABS Education and Work
	Domestic work hours	Male to female unpaid domestic work hours ratio	Census
	Take-up of parental leave	Male to female take-up of parental leave ratio	WGEA (Workplace Gender Equality Agency)
Security	Employment on casual contracts	Female to male casual contracts ratio (ABS definition of casual work; no paid leave entitlements)	ABS Characteristics of Employment
	Income stability	Female to male wage change ratio	ABS Average Weekly Earnings
Segmentation	Industry of employment	Dissimilarity index across ANZSIC	ABS Labour Force
	Occupation of employment	Dissimilarity index across ANZSCO group	ABS Labour Force
Stratification	Income stratification	Male to female ratio below 60% median earnings	ABS Characteristics of Employment
	Leadership positions	Female to male ratio of ANZSCO 111 (Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators)	ABS Labour Force
	Working in jobs below skill level	Male to female ratio of work below skill level associated with highest educational attainment (ANZSCO Skill Levels 1-5)	ABS Labour Force
Safety	Experience of sexual harassment at work	Male to female sexual harassment incidence at work ratio	ABS Personal Safety Survey
	Workplace injury	Workplace Health and Safety incidence rate parity ratio	SafeWork Australia

Data selection principles

The measures and indicators we have used to build each of the seven Index dimensions have been selected according to the following guiding principles:

1. For each dimension, we choose measures that:
 - i. Are specific to the dimension (i.e., with the least overlap with other measures).
 - ii. illustrate the dimension (i.e., does not explain the dimension and is not a consequence of the dimension).
 - iii. are applicable to the labour market as a whole (i.e., the measure is measurable anywhere in the labour market and is not specific to one given industry or occupation).
2. For each measure, we then develop indicators that:
 - i. reflect a gap between men and women as a standalone measure (e.g. share of women in a pool of workers comprised of men and women).
 - ii. provide us with a value that can be used to create the synthetic dimension value (i.e., continuous variable and not categorical).

Methodology

Each variable is measured using Parity Ratios or Dissimilarity Measures

A **parity ratio** measures the gap between two groups (e.g., men and women).

$$\text{Parity ratio} = \frac{\text{Measurement}_{\text{Group1}}}{\text{Measurement}_{\text{Group2}}}$$

In our index, the interpretation of parity ratios is as follows:

- If the *Parity ratio* = 1, there is equality between men and women.
- If the *Parity ratio* > 1, there is disparity in favour of women.
- If the *Parity ratio* < 1, there is disparity in favour of men.

E.g. in terms of the labour force participation parity in 2024, a ratio of 0.88 means women participate at 88% of the rate of men.

A **dissimilarity measure** compares the distribution of men and women across categories (e.g. industries or occupations). In our index, we use the inverse of Duncan's dissimilarity measure.

$$\text{Dissimilarity measure} = 1 - \frac{1}{2} \sum_{i=1}^N \left| \frac{m_i}{M_i} - \frac{f_i}{F_i} \right|$$

- If the *Dissimilarity measure* = 1, there is perfect similarity.
- If the *Dissimilarity measure* = 0, there is perfect dissimilarity.

E.g. an inverse dissimilarity score of 0.69 across ANZSIC groups in 2024 indicates significant gender segregation, with 69% of men or women needing to switch industries for equal distribution.

Index value computation:

- Variables are transformed into distances to equality using algebraic adjustments to ensure consistent scaling and equal weighting.
- An equally weighted average is calculated within each dimension.
- The final index is the equally weighted average of all dimension scores.

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