



Face the facts: Gender Equality 2018

In recent decades, women in Australia have made significant strides towards equality with men. At universities, in workplaces, in boardrooms and in government, a growing number of women have taken on leadership roles, forging pathways for other women and girls to follow. Infographic of statistics presented in this document

In 1984, the [Sex Discrimination Act](#) came into force, making sex discrimination and sexual harassment across various parts of public life against the law.

The Act, which gives effect to Australia's [international human rights obligations](#), has played an important role in changing community attitudes and helping advance gender equality in this country.

Despite this progress, women and girls continue to experience inequality and discrimination in many important parts of their lives, which can limit the choices and opportunities available to them.

About gender equality in Australia

- Women and girls make up just over half (50.7 per cent) of the Australian population.
- While women comprise roughly 47 per cent of all employees in Australia, they take home on average \$251.20 less than men each week (full-time adult ordinary earnings). The national gender “pay gap” is 15.3 per cent and it has remained stuck between 15 per cent and 19 per cent for the past two decades.
- Australian women account for 68% of primary carers for older people and people with disability.
- 95% of primary parental leave (outside of the public-sector) is taken by women and women spend almost three times as much time taking care of children each day, compared to men.
- In 2017, Australia was ranked 35th on a global index measuring gender equality, slipping from a high point of 15th in 2006. While Australia scores very highly in the area of educational attainment, there is still a lot of progress to be made in the areas of economic participation and opportunity and political empowerment.

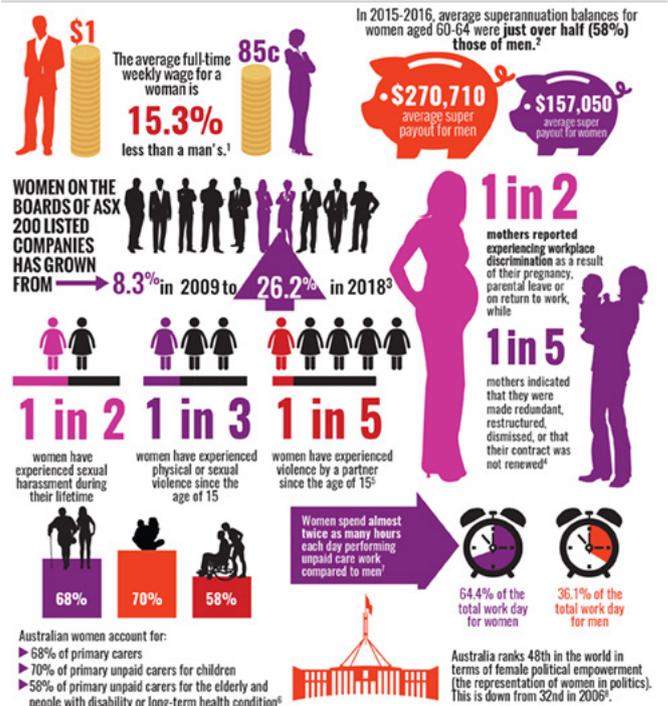
Barriers to gender equality

- The Australian workforce is highly segregated by gender and female-dominated industries – such as aged care, child care and health and community services – have been historically undervalued. Australian women are over-represented as part-time workers in low-paid industries and in insecure work and continue to be underrepresented in leadership roles in the private and public sectors.
- More than half of women aged 18 or older have experienced sexual harassment in their lifetime.
- On average, women spend 64 per cent of their working week performing unpaid care work. They spend almost twice as many hours performing such work each week compared to men.
- In 2015-2016 the average Australian woman was reaching retirement with an average of \$113,660 less superannuation than the average male. As a result, women are more likely to experience poverty in their retirement years and be far more reliant on the Age Pension..
- More than one in three Australian women has experienced physical or sexual violence in her lifetime and one in two experiences sexual harassment.
- It is estimated that violence against women and their children cost the Australian economy \$22 billion in 2015-16.

Positive developments

- The number of women on the Boards of ASX-listed companies grew from 8.3 per cent in 2009 to 26.2 per cent in 2017 due in part to a diversity policy implemented by the ASX Corporate Governance Council in 2010. Increasing the number of women in corporate leadership positions is likely to significantly increase financial returns.

Gender Equality



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- Australian men and women overwhelmingly believe (90 per cent) that men should be as involved in parenting as women. However, while a significant number of fathers, and in particular young fathers, would like to be able to access better workplace flexibility arrangements, men are much more likely than women to have such requests denied.
- As of 2016, over one million Australian workers are able to take leave and enjoy other protections because of domestic violence clauses in their workplace agreement or award conditions.

Did you know?

On average, Australian women have to work an extra 56 days a year to earn the same pay as men for doing the same work.

Our role

The Commission helps people resolve complaints of unfair treatment under the [Sex Discrimination Act](#), including discrimination on the basis of sex, marital (or relationship) status and pregnancy and potential pregnancy. The Act also protects workers with family responsibilities and makes sexual harassment against the law.

The [Sex Discrimination Commissioner](#) works in partnership with a broad range of groups to promote gender equality and counter discrimination, sexual harassment, violence against women and other barriers to gender equality. She also undertakes major research projects and provides policy advice to government and others to bring about positive change.

Find out more about [our work](#) in this area.