



# Gender dynamics in the post-pandemic future of work.

High level data release for International Women's Day 2023.  
Research note 1.

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## Introduction

The **Australian Women's Working Futures (AWWF)** Project is a two-wave survey designed to understand the attitudes of young women and men aged 40 and under about their working futures.

In 2017 the first nationally representative data set on gender and the future of work was collected in Australia.

The 2022 data is part of a larger three-country study comparing gender and the post-pandemic future of work in Australia, the UK and Japan.

Both surveys were administered by Ipsos on behalf of The University of Sydney and The Australian National University.

This research note is part of an Australian Research Council funded project on gendered experiences in and attitudes toward work (Project ID: DP220100657).

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### Data collection timeline and sample sizes:

**2017:** data collected October 2017.

**Sample size 2664 (2162 women: 502 men) in Australia.**

**2022:** data collected October 2022.

**Sample size 2000 (1000 women: 1000 men) in each of three countries – Australia, The UK and Japan.**

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## 2017-2022: A changed terrain

In the period between 2017 and 2022, there have been significant disruptions to and changes in young workers' experience of work and care due to the COVID-19 pandemic, new economic challenges and demands for respect at work.



Women lost more hours and jobs than men. Young women in highly impacted sectors were the most profoundly affected labour market group in terms of job loss. However, a big post-pandemic 'bounce' in late 2022 saw women's participation rate hit an historical high of 62.4%.



Significant public discussion and new practices of remote & flexible working.



A tight labour market with unemployment at historic low – worker bargaining power heightened.



High inflation, rising interest rates & emerging cost of living crisis.



High cost of housing – peak Q1 2022.



Significant public discussion of respect and sexism at work (after high-profile cases in political and legal workplaces and campaigns by women's groups for justice).

## Mismatch: What workers want and what they get

I want	Men			Women		
	I want this in the future	I have it now	The gap (% points)	I want this in the future	I have it now	The gap (% points)
Respect	87%	75%	12pp	91%	75%	16pp
A secure job	87%	71%	16pp	90%	73%	17pp
Balance my work & care	84%	37%	47pp	88%	35%	53pp
Earn enough to pay my bills:	85%	70%	15pp	87%	64%	23pp
Flexibility	85%	60%	25pp	87%	58%	29pp

■ Men  
■ Women

Source: Authors calculations from AWWF (2022). Note: sample includes workers 40 years and under.

# Work From Home

## Prior to the pandemic

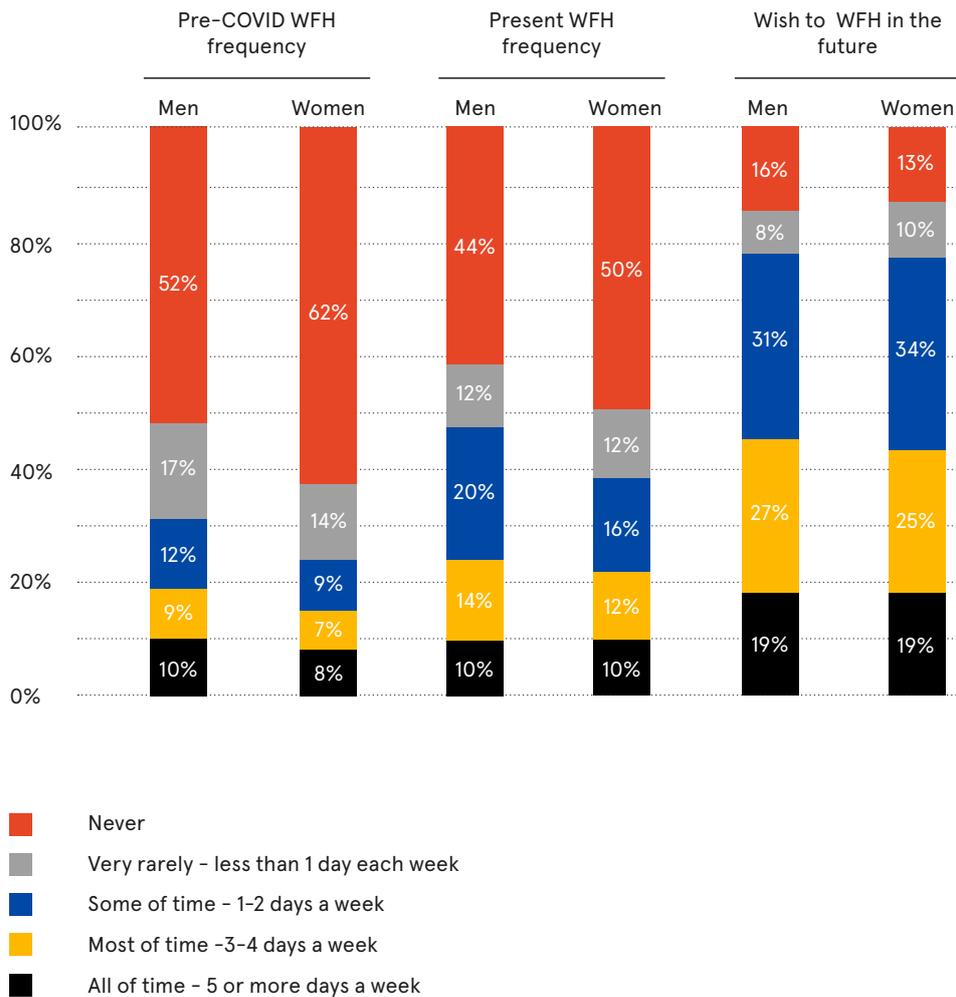
28% of respondents said they worked from home between 1 – 5 days/week. Australian men (31%) were significantly more likely than women (24%) to have worked from home (1-5 days/week).

## Now

41% of Australians are working from home between 1-5 days/week. The gap between men and women is still present, with women significantly less likely than men to currently work from home between 1-5 days/week (38% vs 44%, respectively).

## When looking to the future

Most Australians (77%) wish to work from home between 1-5 days/week. This is consistent among both women and men.

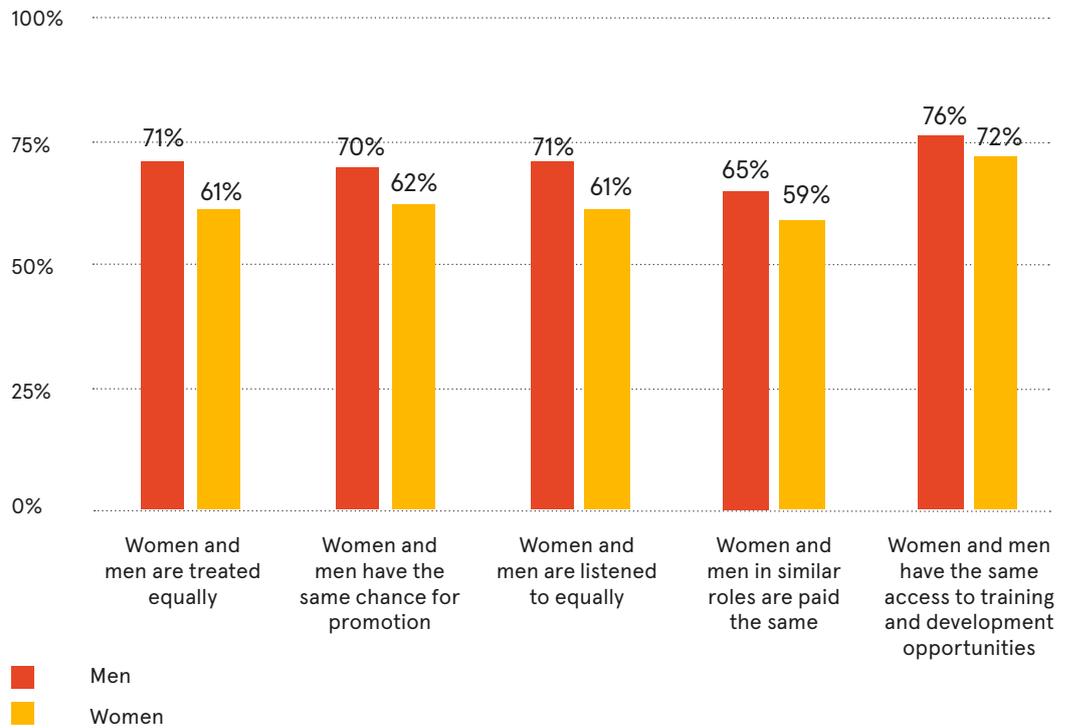


Source: Authors calculations from AWWF (2022). Note: sample includes workers 40 years and under.

## Perceptions of gender equality at work

- Almost 40 % of workers under 40 **do not agree** women and men are treated equally in their workplace, have the same chance for promotion, are listened to equally or are paid the same for work in similar roles.
- Women are more likely to identify gender inequality than men.
- There has been little change in gendered perceptions of equality at work between 2017-2022.

% agree in their current job...

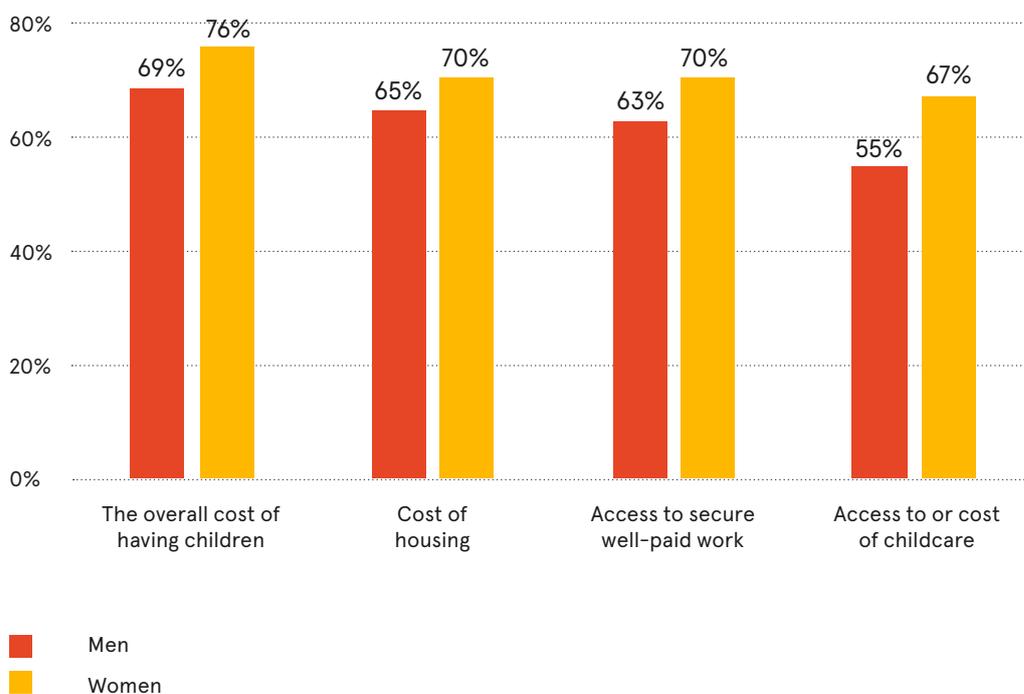


Source: Authors calculations from AWWF (2022). Note: sample includes workers 40 years and under.

## Family formation

- The overall cost of having a child, cost of housing, access to secure work and affordable early childhood education and care services impact decisions about how many children Australian workers plan to have.
- Women are significantly more likely than men to be influenced by these factors when thinking about the number of children they expect to have.

What influences the number of children workers expect to have?



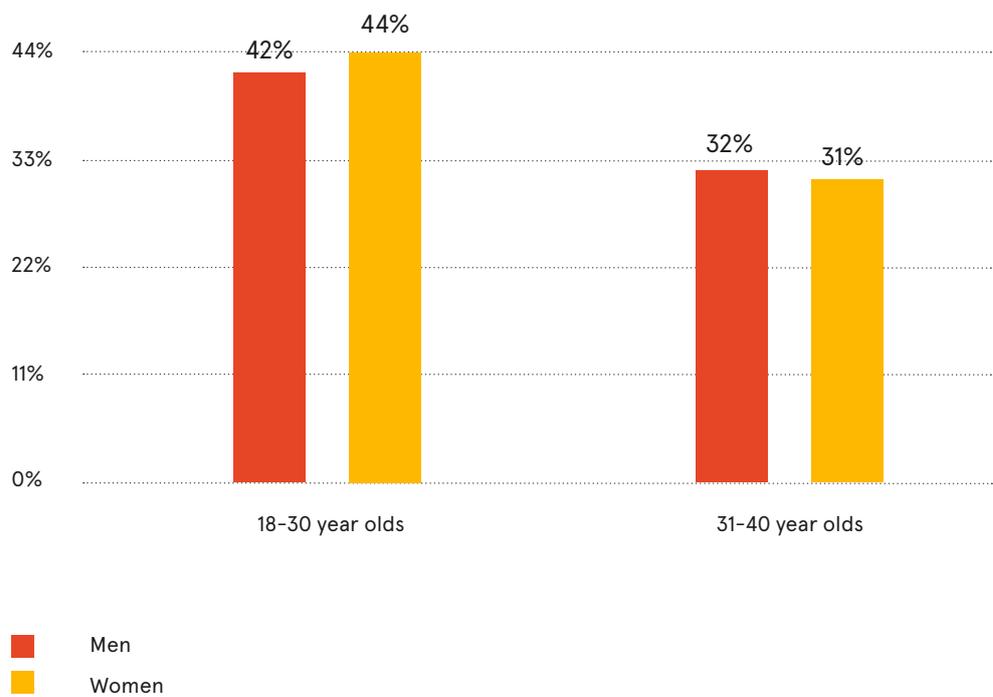
Source: Authors calculations from AWWF (2022). Note: sample includes workers 40 years and under.

## The influence of climate on family formation

Climate change influences decisions about family formation with a significant difference between those aged 18-30 and 31-40 years.

- 43% of 18-30 year olds compared with 31% of 31-40 year olds report that climate change has a 'great deal' or 'fair amount' of influence on how many children they expect to have.
- There is no significant difference between men and women in each age group.

Share of respondents reporting climate change influences their fertility choices



Source: Authors calculations from AWWF (2022). Note: sample includes workers 40 years and under.



## Get in touch

For information or to contact the Gender Equality in Working Life Research Initiative, please email:

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