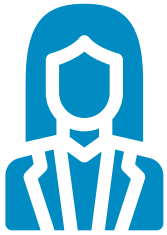# Occupational gender segregation

is the unequal distribution of male and female workers across and within job types

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High **occupational segregation** persists in Australia, despite **increasing female workforce participation**.

Female participation has risen by

41%

since 1980

The **skilled migration** system also contributes to occupational segregation as **female migrants** are more likely to be **secondary applicants** to their partner's visa, and to work in **lower-paid occupations**.

In 2020-21, only

31%

of primary temporary migration applicants were women

High gender segregation **limits job mobility,** stifling labour-market **flexibility** and **productivity**. It is a complex issue, driven by many **economic, social** and **historical** factors.

Across the first five years of parenting their first child women's earnings are reduced by

55%

on average while men's earnings are unaffected.

Reducing the **'motherhood penalty'** and changing **workplace cultures** that limit flexible work will **increase equality** of opportunity, helping to reduce segregation.

Employers have a major role to play, including through **blind hiring** and **flexible-work** practices.
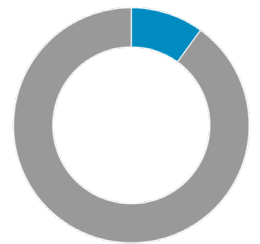
10%

of organisations in Australia set flexible-work targets.

Tackling gender segregation directly within occupations requires addressing **disparities in STEM education**, the number of women in **leadership** and **gender stereotyping**.

Recommendations

WHAT THE GOVERNMENT CAN DO (LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC POLICY)

RECOMMENDATION 1

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Strengthen family-friendly policies including:

- Make paid parental leave more gender-equal, with more leave reserved for secondary carers under a 'use it or lose it' system;
- Reduce high effective marginal tax rates for primary caregivers; and
- Increase access to affordable high-quality childcare and monitor how much this improves workforce participation.

RECOMMENDATION 2

CORPORATE DISCLOSURE, COMPLIANCE & REPORTING

Strengthen corporate disclosure, compliance and reporting under the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012:

- Enable the Workplace Gender Equality Agency to publish key data such as gender wage gaps by employer;
- Strengthen compliance through minimum standards to qualify for grants and government procurement; and
- Improve data collection by supporting digital solutions and government reuse of data.

RECOMMENDATION 3

EVALUATION DATA FOR WOMEN-IN-STEM PROGRAMS

Require evaluation data for women-in-STEM programs to be made public as a condition of federal funding.

RECOMMENDATION 4

STEM MENTORING & LEADERSHIP

Shift the focus of women-in-STEM programs to mentoring and leadership, starting in school and continuing through the transition to work.