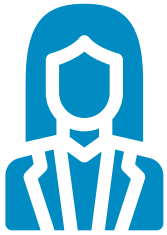# Occupational gender segregation

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

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.
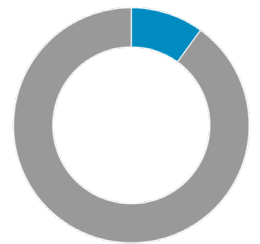
10%

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 ORGANISATIONS CAN DO (VOLUNTARY AND INTERNAL PRACTICES)

RECOMMENDATION 1

FORMALISE FLEXIBLE-WORK ARRANGEMENTS
Encourage businesses to formalise access to flexible-work arrangements and tackle other workplace culture barriers to participation.

RECOMMENDATION 2

ADOPT BEST PRACTICE IN HIRING & PROMOTION
Tackle gender discrimination in hiring and promotion by adopting blind hiring, standardising interviews and setting targets in heavily gendered occupations, with greater transparency on gender balance in sectors dominated by one gender.

RECOMMENDATION 3

BOARD REPRESENTATION
Update the corporate governance principles to require a minimum 40 per cent male and 40 per cent female representation on company boards.