



Australian Government



Jobs and Skills Australia

# Gender Economic Equality Study

Terms of Reference





## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Jobs and Skills Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Australia and recognises the continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to Elders past and present.

## Study Terms of Reference

As part of its functions under the *Jobs and Skills Australia Act 2022*, Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) is undertaking a Gender Economic Equality Study (the Study).

This Study will analyse and explore the intersections between two key policy challenges for progressing gender economic equality: horizontal occupational segregation and gendered divides, choices and outcomes across the education, training and skills systems. The Study will prioritise intersectional investigations of the trends and barriers across both and potential policy levers to manage them.

This focus on increasing gender balance across the labour market and the intersectional approach is aligned to Priority Area 3 of the [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality](#). Together with the [National Cabinet priority](#) to improve 'gender balance across the labour market', the study will align with current Government priorities and provide recommendations on next steps to advance gender equality.

In line with JSA's tripartite mandate and under the guidance of JSA's Ministerial Advisory Board, the Study will work with key stakeholders through targeted engagement and collaboration including through a study Steering Committee.

JSA will present the final deliverables to government in 2025 and will publish consultation, framework and spotlight papers throughout the Study.

## Governance and Consultation

The Study will be underpinned by close engagement and consultations with industry stakeholders, including peak bodies, employers, unions, educational skills and training institutions. Governments at all levels and Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs), where necessary, will also be consulted. JSA will plan stakeholder engagement to leverage existing processes where possible to minimise stakeholder burden.

For example, JSA will leverage existing governance arrangements, including Australian Government Gender Data and [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality](#) Interdepartmental Committees, and provide opportunities for stakeholders to contribute to the Study through public submissions and expert forums. The Study's Steering Group has a membership reflecting diversity and a depth of perspectives on how the labour market, skills systems and social demographics, identities and disadvantage interact. It includes experts and representatives from industry, unions, government, advocacy groups and scholars. The membership of the Steering Committee and stakeholder consultation have been planned to ensure a diversity of members and voices. The Steering Committee is chaired by JSA Deputy Commissioner, Megan Lilly.

JSA will brief the Australian Government Minister for Skills and Training, Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, and Minister for Women on the Study's progress when requested or needed.

## **Broad Scope**

This Study will aim to deliver new perspectives on the intersections between gendered occupational segregation and education, training and skills divides including but not limited to:

- New and more detailed whole of economy categorisations and/or indicators of occupational segregation;
- Historical analysis of occupational segregation trends, insights on future trends and policy lessons or implications of both where possible;
- The implications of new Australian Bureau of Statistics occupation classification for understanding gendered labour market trends ahead of the 2026 census;
- Analysis of how the national skills system affects women's equality through a focused analysis of post-training outcomes (in relation to pay, occupational mobility, further education and welfare) are gendered and what this looks like for different cohorts;
- Exploration of leaky pipeline trends post-training and the different policy implications for both highly gendered or more gender balanced occupations;
- Intersectional, longitudinal and post-qualification gender pay gap data that is distinct from existing ABS and Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) reporting;
- Insights into gender economic equality, through an age cohort and life course lens where possible, to better identify the lifetime disadvantage of gender economic equality and the appropriate policy reforms needed;
- A JSA Gender 'Framework' to embed gendered and intersectional analysis across labour market and skills insights, policy development and stakeholders;
- Intersectional insights on all the above where feasible;
- Case studies to inform study recommendations and the policy implications of data insights. For example, on:
  - a. education and training barriers in particular industries or as faced by more disadvantaged cohorts;
  - b. the highly gendered nature of supply and demand in specific occupations;
  - c. the impact of migration or tax settings on gender economic equality;
  - d. promising government, industry or other policy levers to support workers in highly gendered occupations and mitigate the leaky pipeline.

This scope fills relevant policy evidence gaps while showcasing JSA's unique data assets and cementing a point of difference in a busy and significant academic research and government policy space. For example, the national gender strategy, the Fair Work Commission's (FWC) current [Gender Undervaluation Priority Awards Review](#) and recently announced review into examining part-time work in all awards in 2025 will progress as the Study is active. The FWC pay equity panel is also actively releasing research on gender pay equity, occupational segregation and gender undervaluation which the Study is incorporating. The [National Plan to End Violence against Women](#) and associated work including the [Final Report in Paid Family and Domestic Violence Leave](#) and the [Rapid Review Prevention Approaches](#), which identifies employment participation as a prevention lever, is also notable.

Furthermore, Closing the Gap initiatives and the national gender strategy all mandate the need for intersectional data. The Women's Economic Equality Taskforce identified intersectional pay gap data as a key missing evidence gap.<sup>1</sup>

This intersectional approach aims to better describe the complexity of barriers and potential enablers to progress women's economic equality across different cohorts with compounding forms of disadvantage and thus identify more nuanced policy recommendations to enact change. For example, the different employment, education, skills and training barriers or outcomes migrants, single mothers or culturally and linguistically diverse cohorts face.

This approach is also consistent with JSA's broader legislative remit, which identifies a focus on priority cohorts (such as First Nations Australians and people with disability), gender equality, insecure work and regional Australia. JSA may identify labour market and skills issues across cohorts which require further research and will fall outside the scope, remit or timing of this Study.

The Study will use both qualitative and quantitative research methods and extensive consultation with stakeholders to provide recommendations to government on progressing gender economic equality.

## Process

JSA will publish spotlight papers with interim findings and the JSA Gender Framework throughout the Study before presenting its final deliverable to government in 2025. JSA will publish the final deliverables and recommendations shortly thereafter.

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. (2023). [A 10-year-plan to unleash the full capacity and contribution of women to the Australian economy 2023 - 2033](#), page 22. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Australian Government.