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Gender Diversity Data Report 2024

The Australian rail workforce



**Australasian
Railway
Association**

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Introduction

Improving gender diversity in the Australian rail workforce is a key focus for the Australasian Railway Association (ARA). The rail industry plays a vital role in ensuring a strong, sustainable industry for the future and drives performance innovations and better solutions for our sector.

The ARA has a Women in Rail Committee, founded in 2016, with the goal of developing a national strategy and action plan to achieve gender diversity across the industry. The group is also focused on improving the representation of women across industry and addressing systematic barriers preventing the success of women in the industry.

The current **Women in Rail Strategy** has four strategic areas of focus:

	Industry Knowledge – Measure successes and understand the issues		Professional Development – Grow capacity and capability of women in rail
	Organisational Impact – Encourage inclusive and respectful workplaces		Promote Rail to Women – Increase female participation in rail

This survey is based on the Australian Government's Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)¹ questionnaire. WGEA is a Commonwealth Government agency established under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*. As part of the legislation, the Act requires employers with 100 or more employees to report annually against six gender equality indicators. In the 2022-23 reporting period, WGEA received only 14 responses from the rail industry to compile their rail transport data for the same period.

To have a comprehensive understanding of gender diversity and associated initiatives across the industry, the ARA, on behalf of the rail industry, collates diversity data to benchmark the rail industry against the national average and to measure the progress over time within the rail industry. The information collected assists the ARA and the rail industry to identify areas of success or focus to develop initiatives and programs to address gender diversity and support workforce inclusion.

The survey questions were designed to build on data collected to ensure a complete representation of the Australian rail workforce. The reporting period of the survey aligns with the WGEA reporting period of 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 to allow WGEA reporting rail employers to resubmit the same data and enable data comparison.

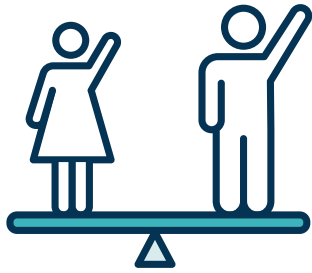
Survey data was collected at the organisational level to report on employees who support the development and function of the Australian rail network and its supply chain. Organisations of various sizes contributed to the data including passenger operators, freight and heavy haul operators, suppliers and manufacturers, and consultants. Due to the small number of organisations reporting non-binary employees, they have not been included in the analysis.

The ARA would like to thank ARA member organisations who responded to the survey. The contributions provided will generate greater clarity on gender diversity within the rail industry and will help make rail an employer of choice.

All information collected has been de-identified with only high-level aggregated data made publicly available.

¹ WGEA is an Australian Government statutory agency created by the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012, legislated to collect and publish gender employment data from all Australian non-public sector employers with 100 or more employees.

Executive summary

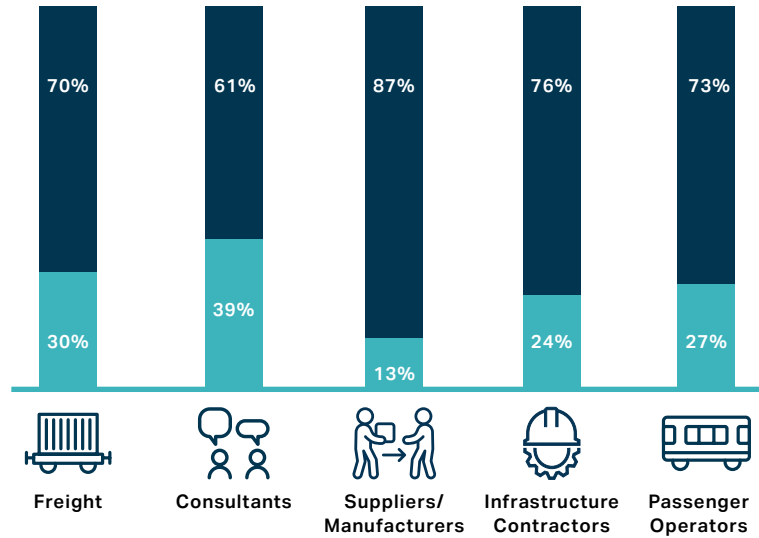


80%

of organisations have formal policies in place to support gender equality

Gender breakdown by sector

Male ■ Female ■



26%

of CEOs are women, increasing from 16 per cent in 2020-21

28%

of the rail workforce are females (24 per cent in 2020/21)

70%

of organisations have flexible workplace policies

36%

of promotions were awarded to females

34%

of new appointments were to females

20%

female resignations (down from 29 per cent in 2020/21)

14%

of governing bodies have female chairs, which has dropped from 27 per cent in 2020-21

25%

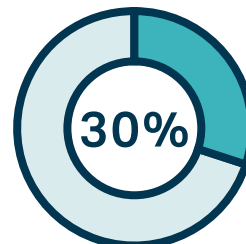
of females in managerial positions

100%

of respondents provided paid parental leave to both men and women (up from 93 per cent in 2020/21)



Female participation within the freight sector increased from 23 to 30 per cent



Governing bodies had 30 per cent female representation

Summary of survey results

Breakdown of survey respondents

The survey was circulated to more than 220 ARA member organisations. Forty-five ARA member organisations responded (20 per cent of potential respondents). A breakdown of the number of respondents by sector based on the data collected by the ARA is shown in Figure 1.

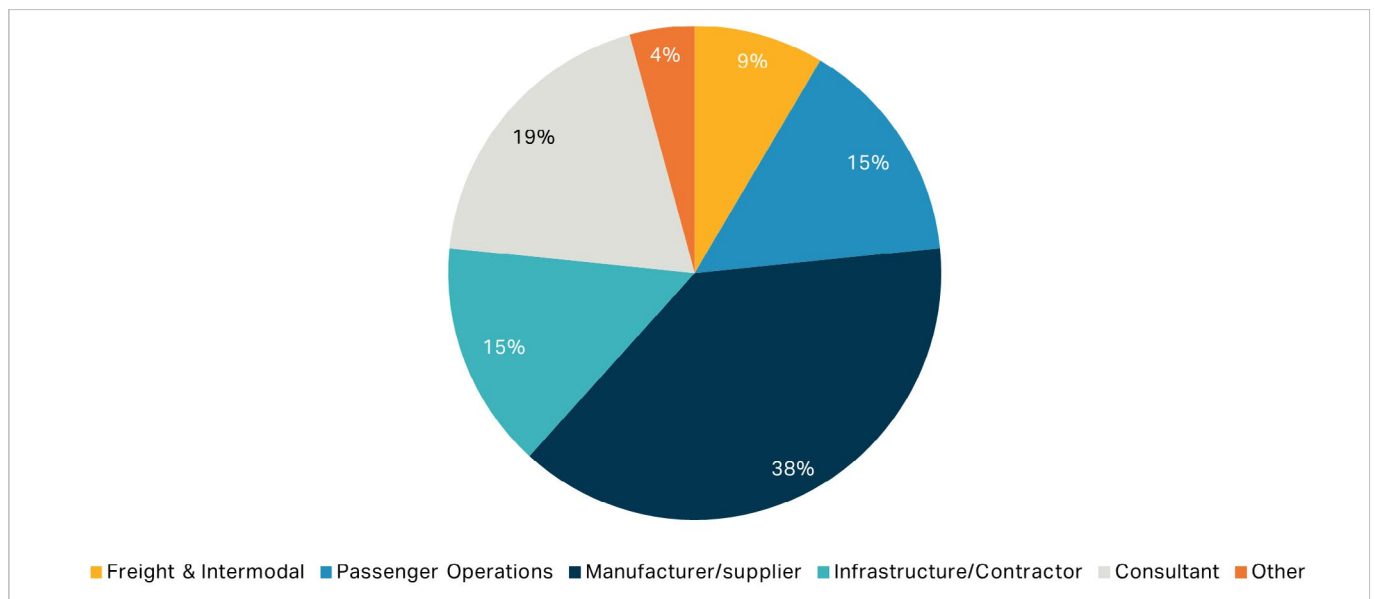


Figure 1: Survey respondents by sector



Gender breakdown of workforce

Gender response options in the survey included female, male and other².

The survey highlights that 28 per cent of the Australian rail workforce are female for the survey reporting period 2022-23. This is a four percentage point increase from 2020-21 which followed an improvement of two percentage points from the previous reporting period 2018-19.

Figure 2 highlights the gender division between full-time, part-time, and casual employees. Full-time female employment has increased by three percentage points since 2020-21. Part-time employment dropped by one percentage point in 2022-23, which subsequently saw an increase in casual employment by four percentage points.

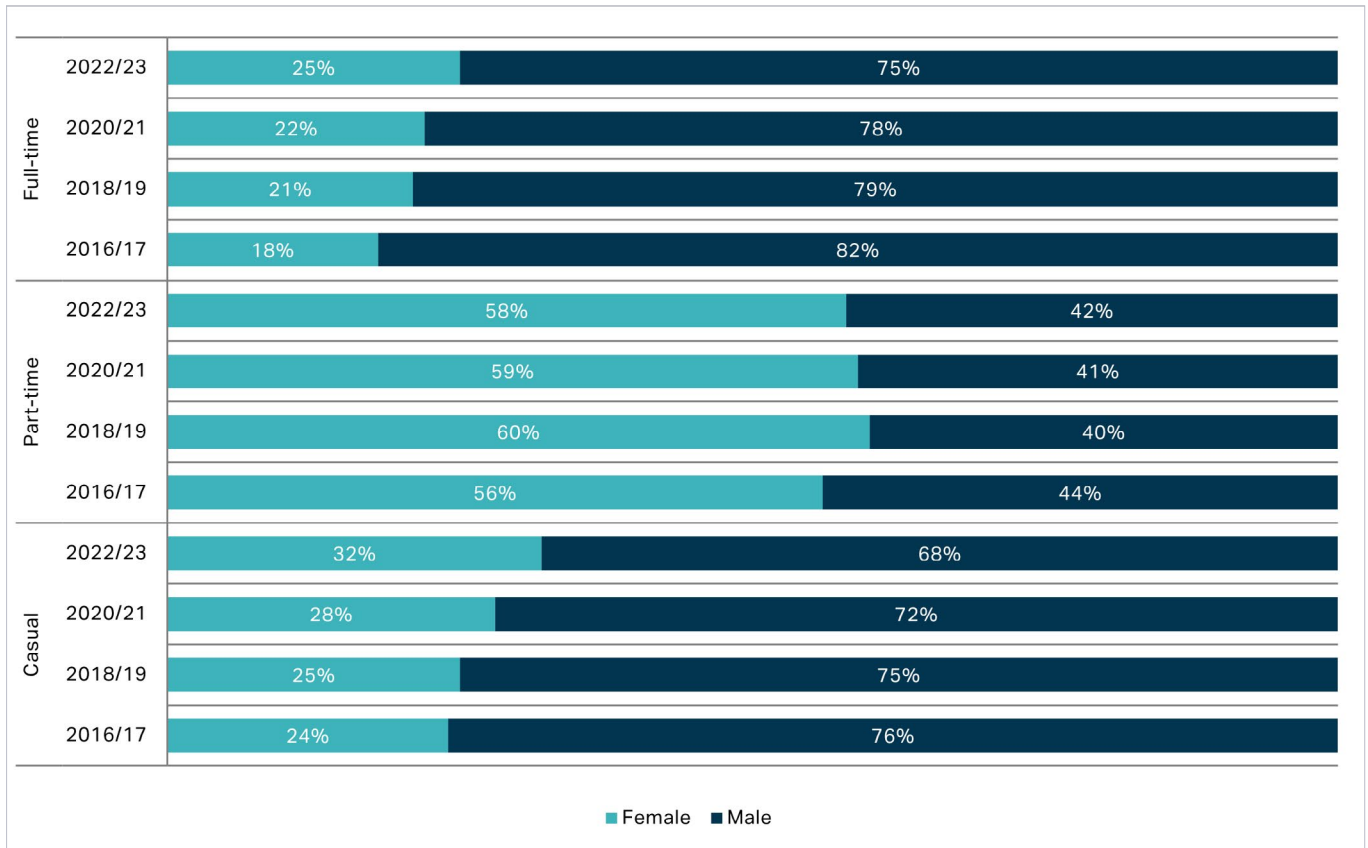


Figure 2: Gender division between types of employment

² The 'other' gender option aligns to the WGEA questionnaire use the term Gender X, which refers to any non-binary person who identifies with a number of gender identities that sit within, outside of, across or between spectrum of male, female and non binary. Non-binary people may also be referred to as gender diverse.

Management roles

Females are represented in 25 per cent of managerial positions in the Australian rail industry. Female representation is steadily increasing across management categories since 2020-21. Figure 3 below shows a breakdown of this representation across the different types of managerial positions and the rail industry's progress since 2016-17, as well as a comparison against the national WGEA average.

Significantly, the rail industry saw a significant increase in female CEOs with the average rising to 26 per cent, an increase of ten percentage points from 2020-21. This is positive improvement compared with the WGEA average of 22 per cent. This highlights the steady progress the rail industry is making in some management roles, including key management personnel.

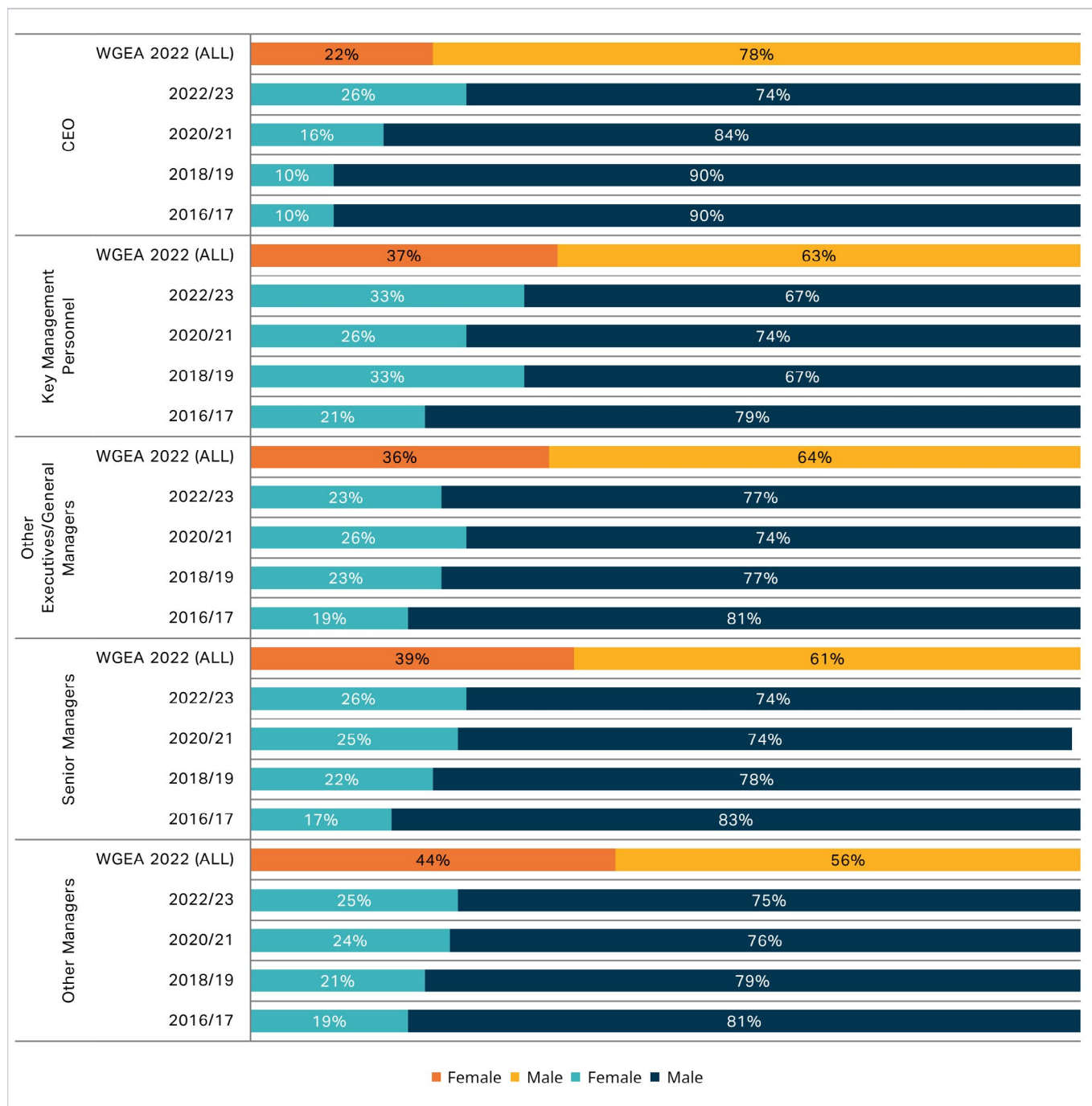


Figure 3: Gender breakdown of manager roles during the reporting period

Non-managerial roles

Females hold 24 per cent of non-managerial positions (up from 22 per cent in 2018-19). Females have the highest representation in clerical and administrative positions at 37 per cent and lowest representation as labourers, machinery operators and drivers, technicians and trade positions. However, the proportion of females as machinery operators and drivers, and technicians and trades is slightly above the national WGEA average, as outlined in Figure 4.

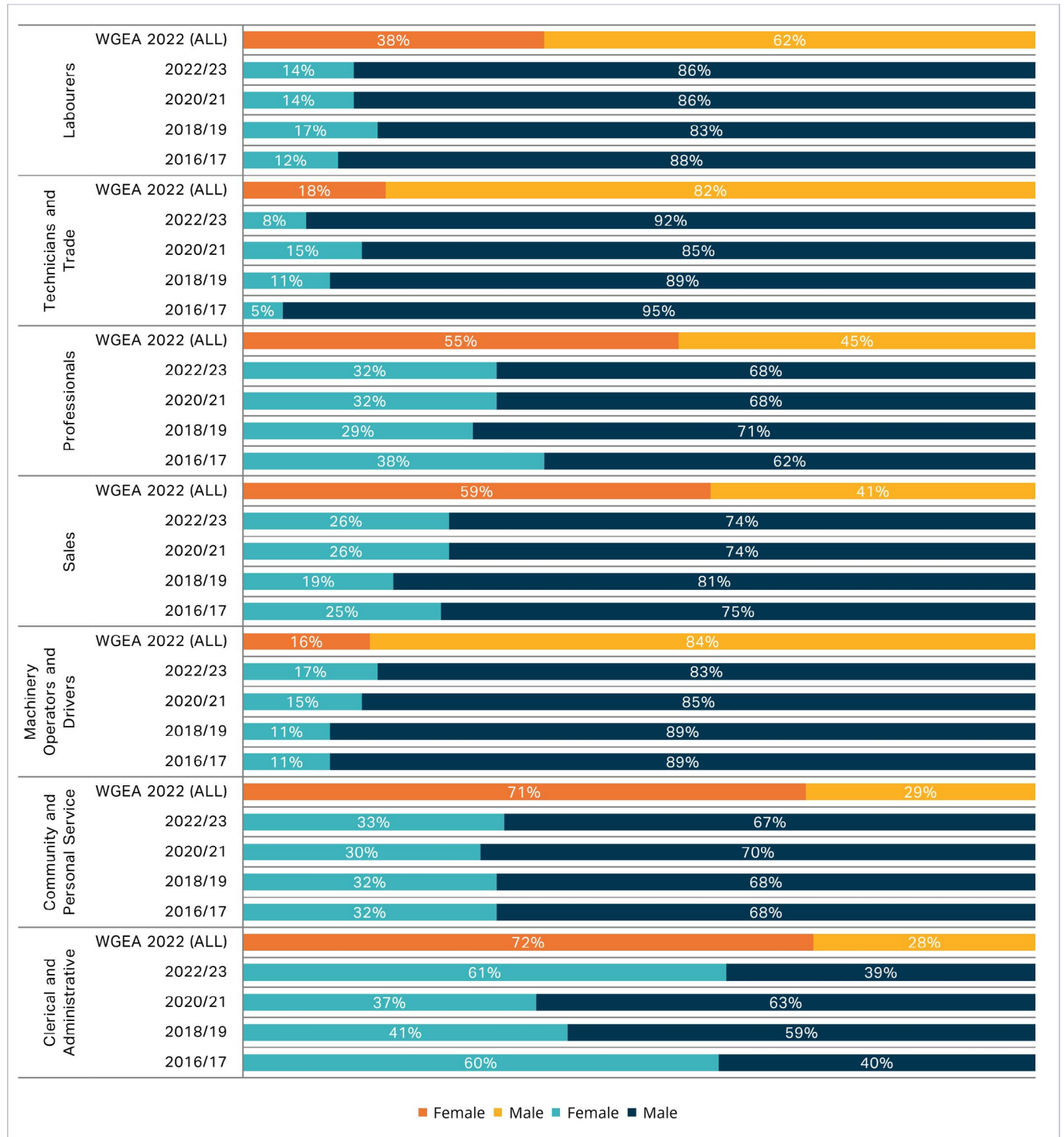


Figure 4: Gender breakdown of non-managerial roles during the reporting period

Sector Comparisons

Consultants continue to have the highest proportion of women in their workforce at 39 per cent compared with the other rail sectors. Rail manufacturers and suppliers have the lowest proportion of females in their workforce overall at 13 per cent.

Thirty per cent of managers are female in the rail freight sector, an increase of seven percentage points since 2020-21. The passenger operations sector averaged 27 per cent of workers being female whilst infrastructure contractors had females constitute 21 per cent of the work force.

The proportion of females across non-manager and manager positions has either risen or remained steady across the various rail sectors with the exception of non-managerial females in the supplier/manufacturing sector as well as the consultant sector.

A comparison between the rail sectors, regarding the proportion of females in managerial and non-managerial positions, as well as changes since 2016-17 are shown in Figure 5-9

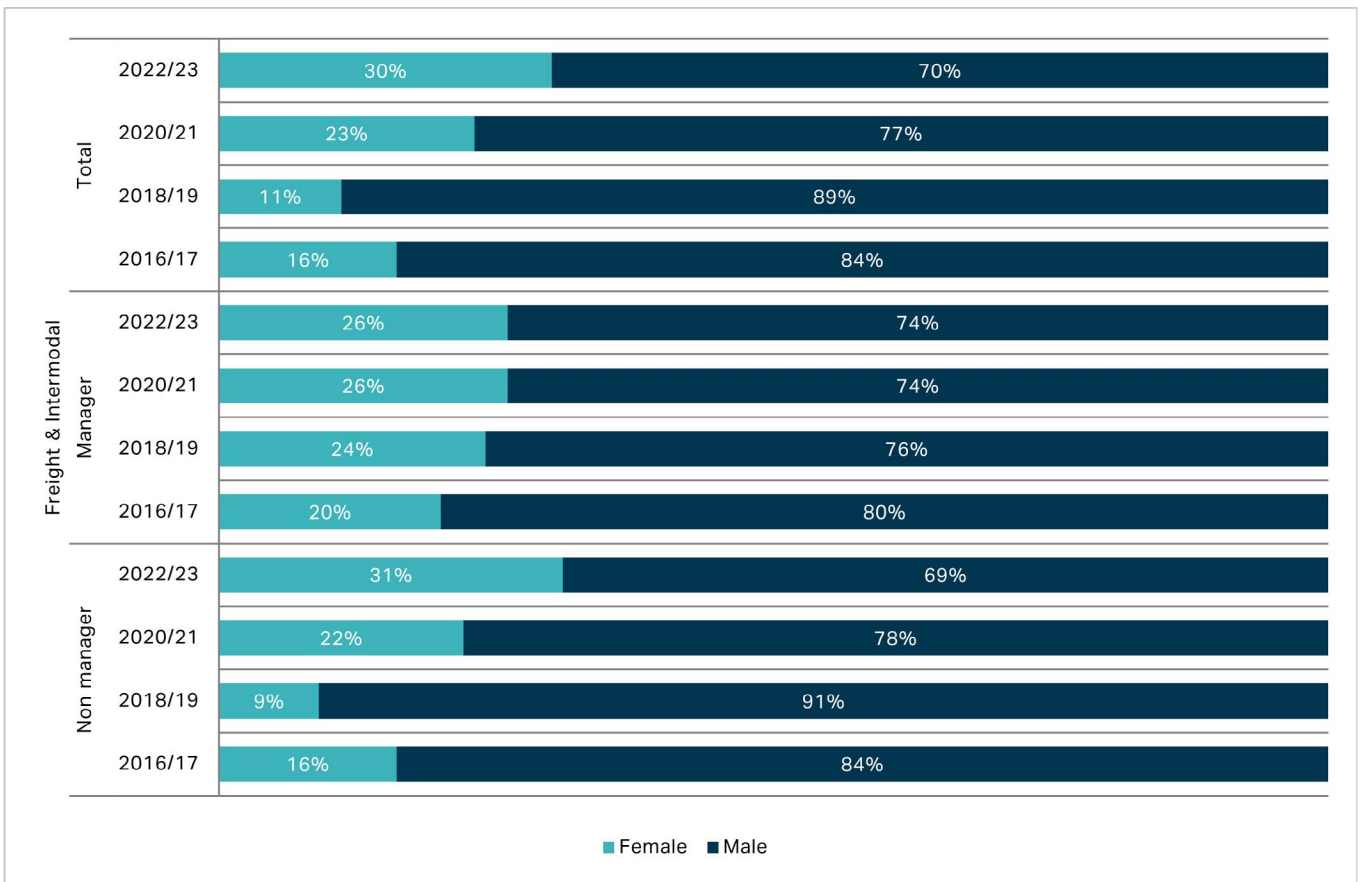


Figure 5: Gender breakdown of managers and non-managers in the freight operator sector

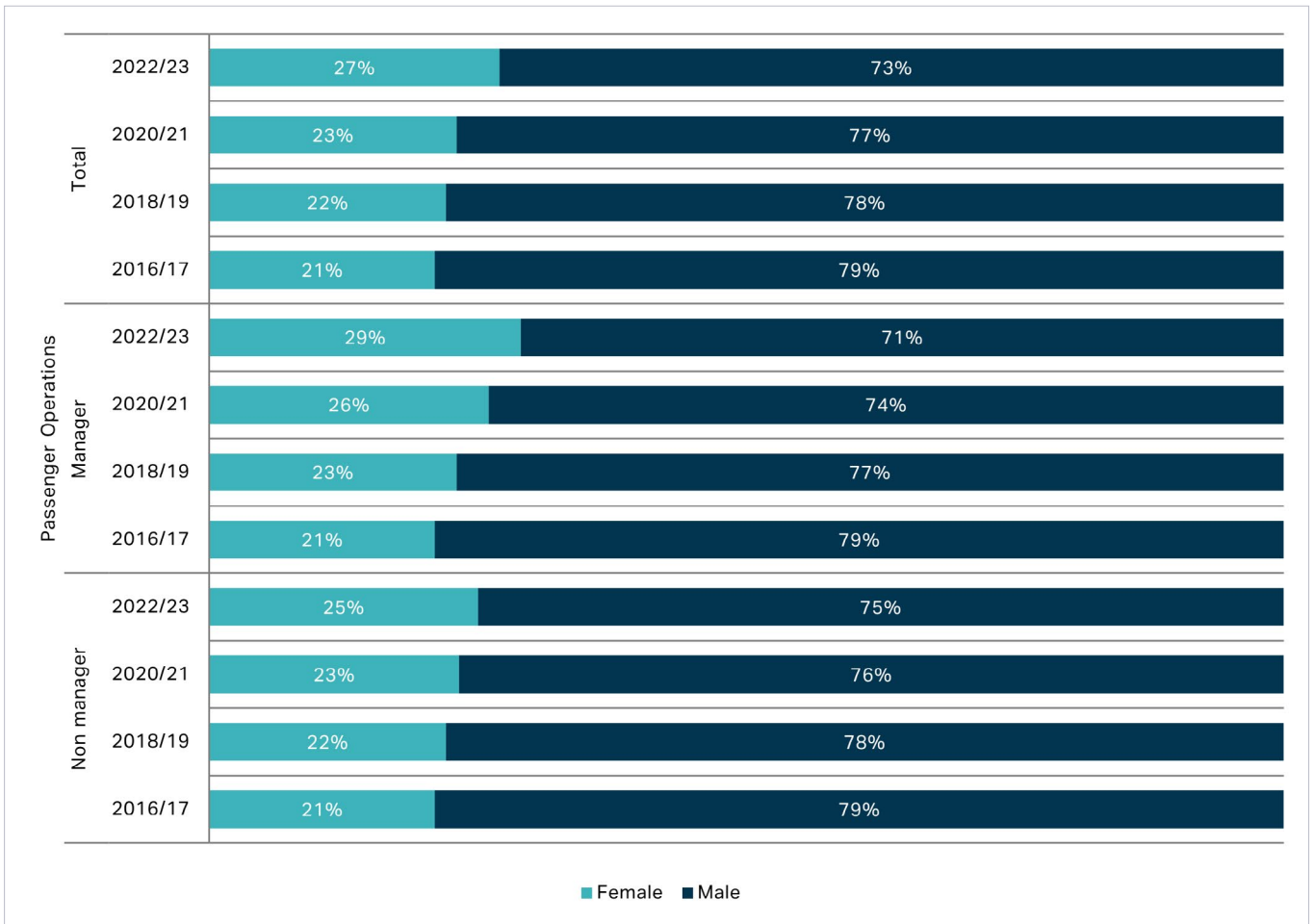


Figure 6: Gender breakdown of managers and non-managers in the passenger operator sector

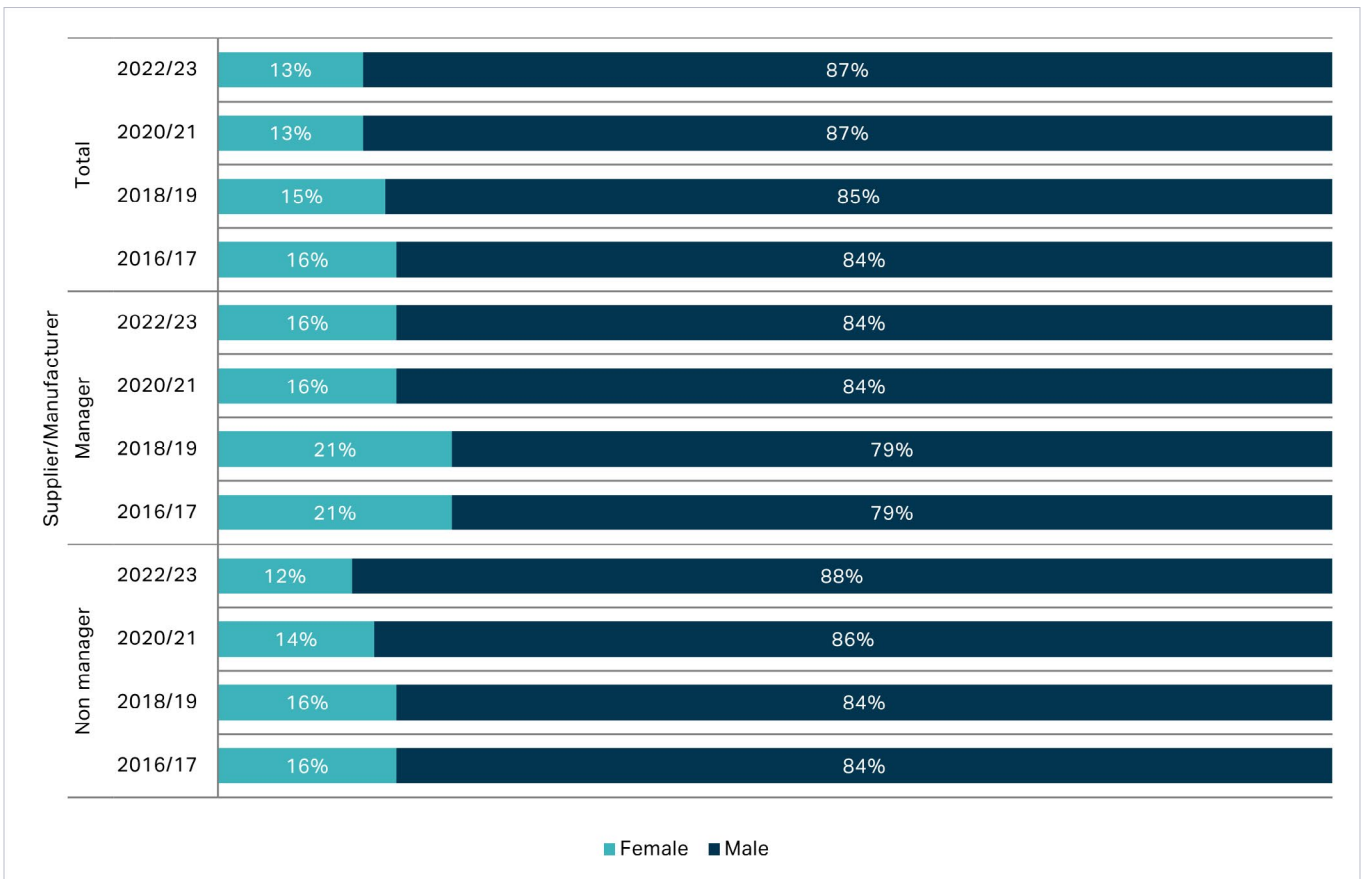


Figure 7: Gender breakdown of managers and non-managers in the rail supplier/manufacturers sector

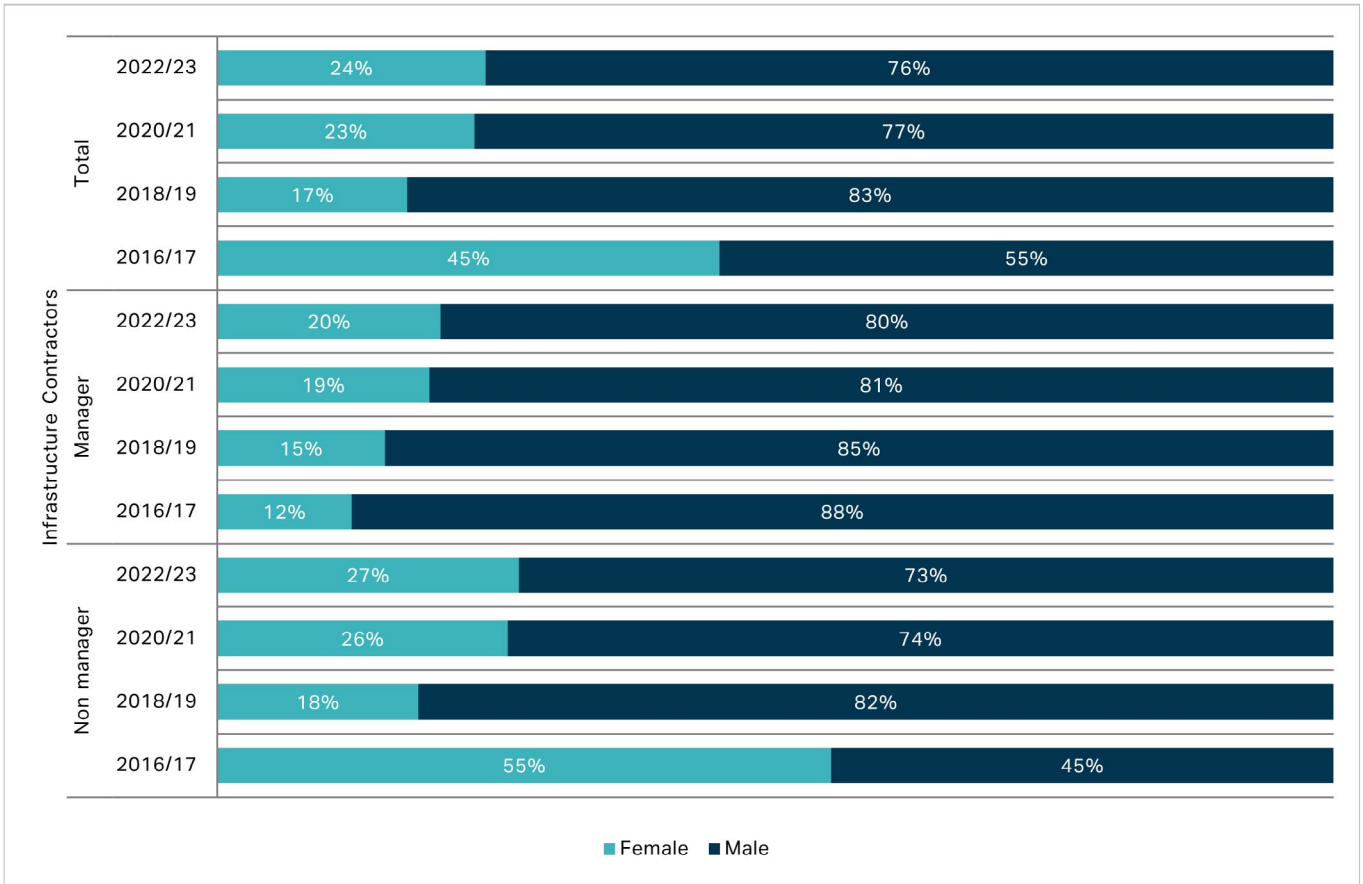


Figure 8: Gender breakdown of managers and non-managers in the infrastructure contractors sector

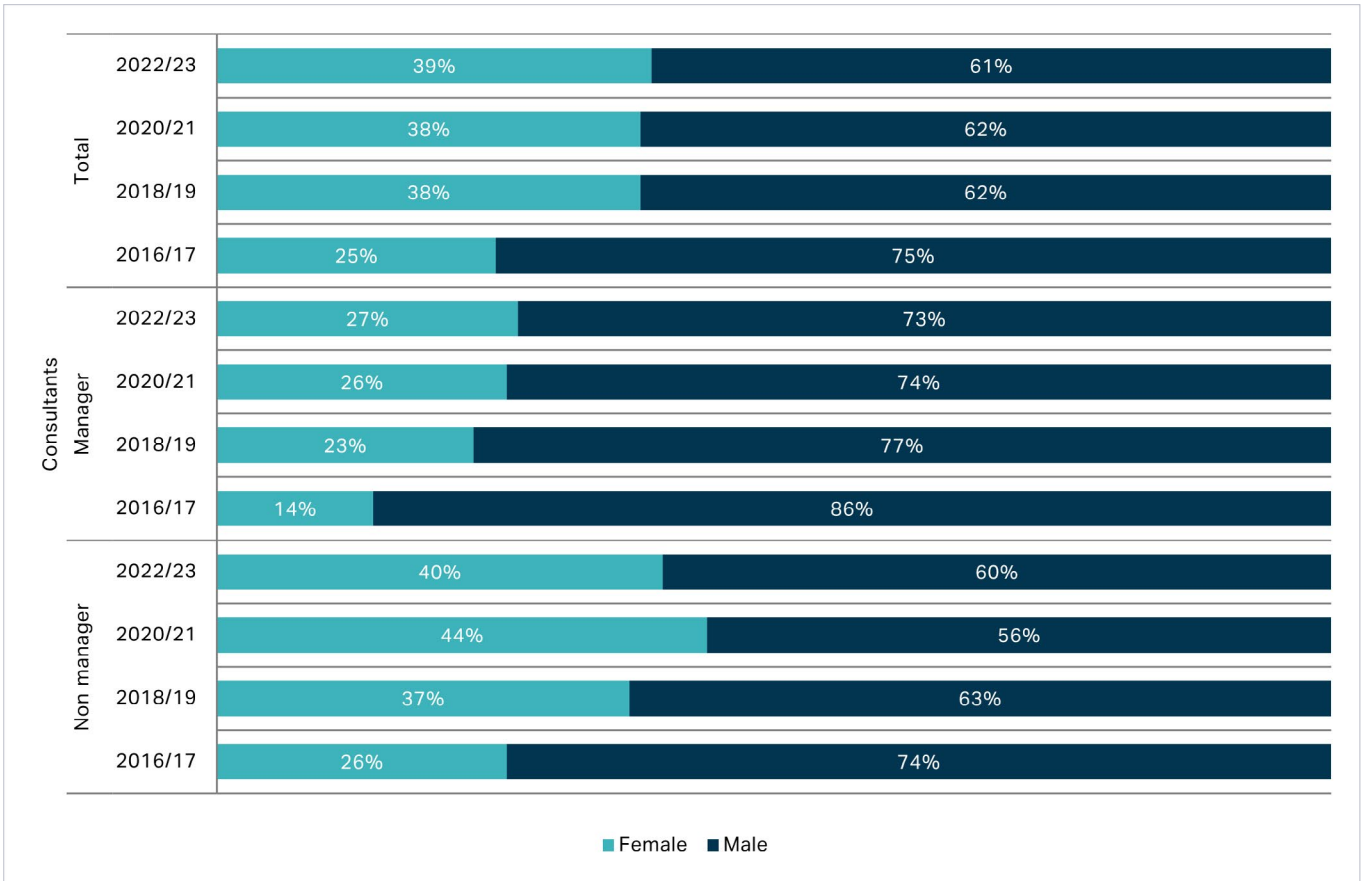


Figure 9: Gender breakdown of managers and non-managers in the consultant sector

New appointments

Females were awarded 25 per cent of new appointments to manager positions in 2022-23. Whilst this number was lower compared with data received in 2020-21, there was an increase of two percentage points in females being awarded new appointments, 34 per cent in the reporting period.

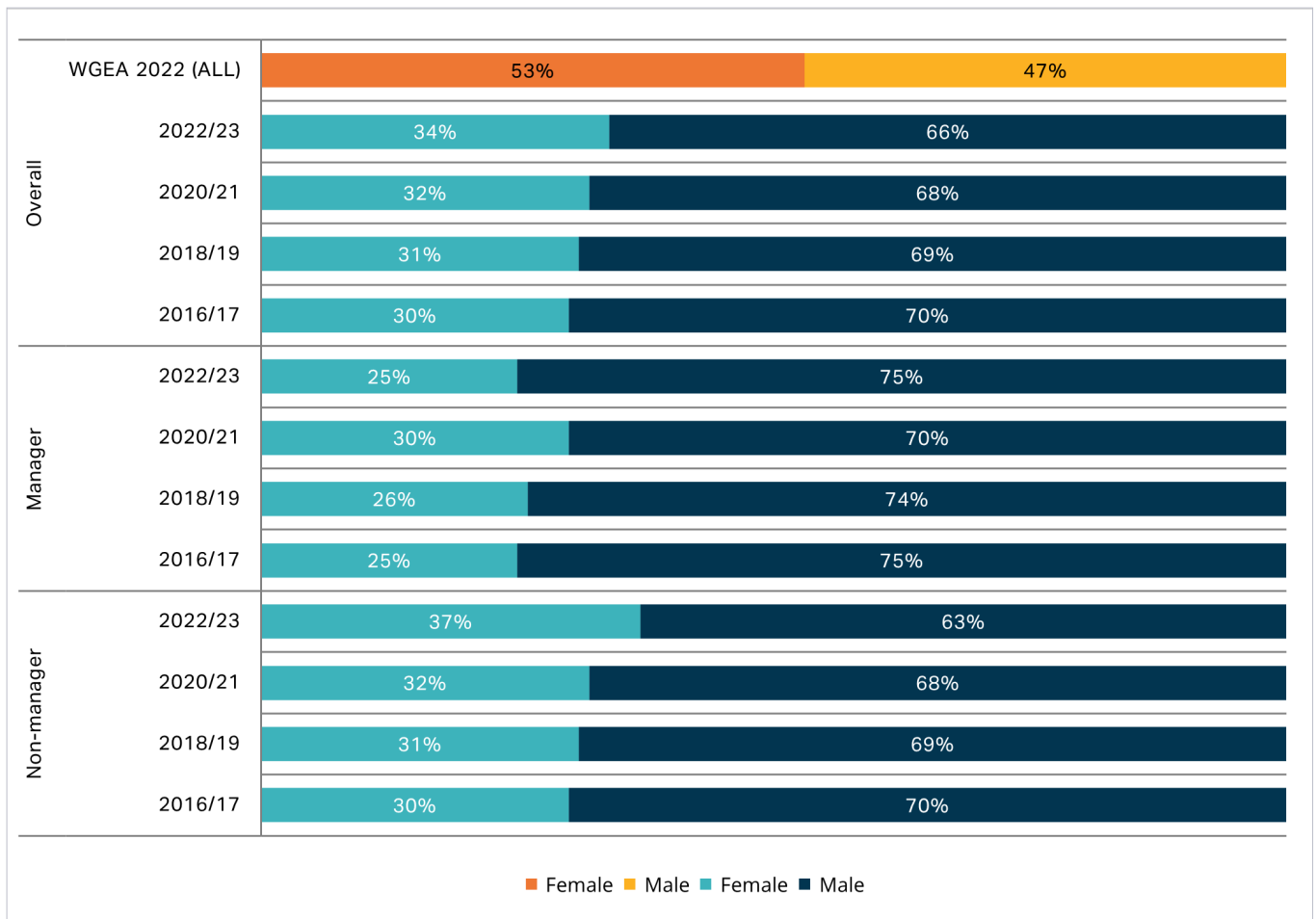


Figure 10: Gender breakdown of new appointments to manager and non-manager roles

Promotions

Thirty-six per cent of all promotions were awarded to females, an increase from 32 per cent in 2020-21, but still lower than the WGEA National Average of 48 per cent. Figure 13 shows a decline in the proportion of females promoted in managerial positions from 34 per cent in 2020-21 to 28 per cent in 2022-23. The data also shows a nine percentage point increase in promotions to non-manager positions in 2022-23.

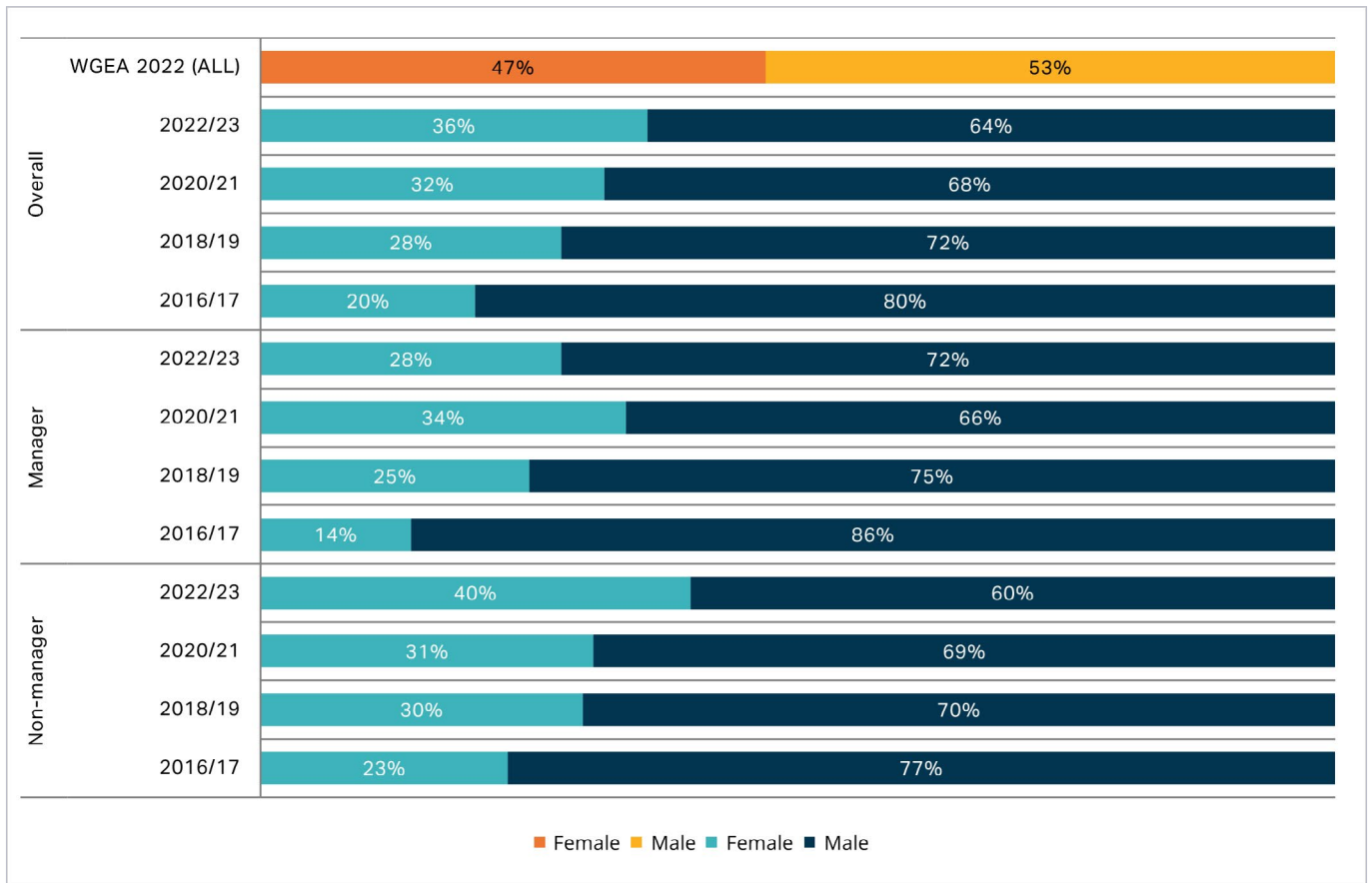


Figure 11: Gender breakdown of promotions by manager and non-manager roles



Resignations

Twenty per cent of total resignations in 2022-23 were by females, a notable reduction of nine percentage points compared with 2020-21 in which females accounted for 29 per cent of resignations. This remains a significant outlier for women compared with the WGEA average of 54 per cent.

In 2022-23, there was a nine percentage point increase in female manager resignations to 28 per cent up from 19 per cent in 2020-21, as shown in Figure 12.

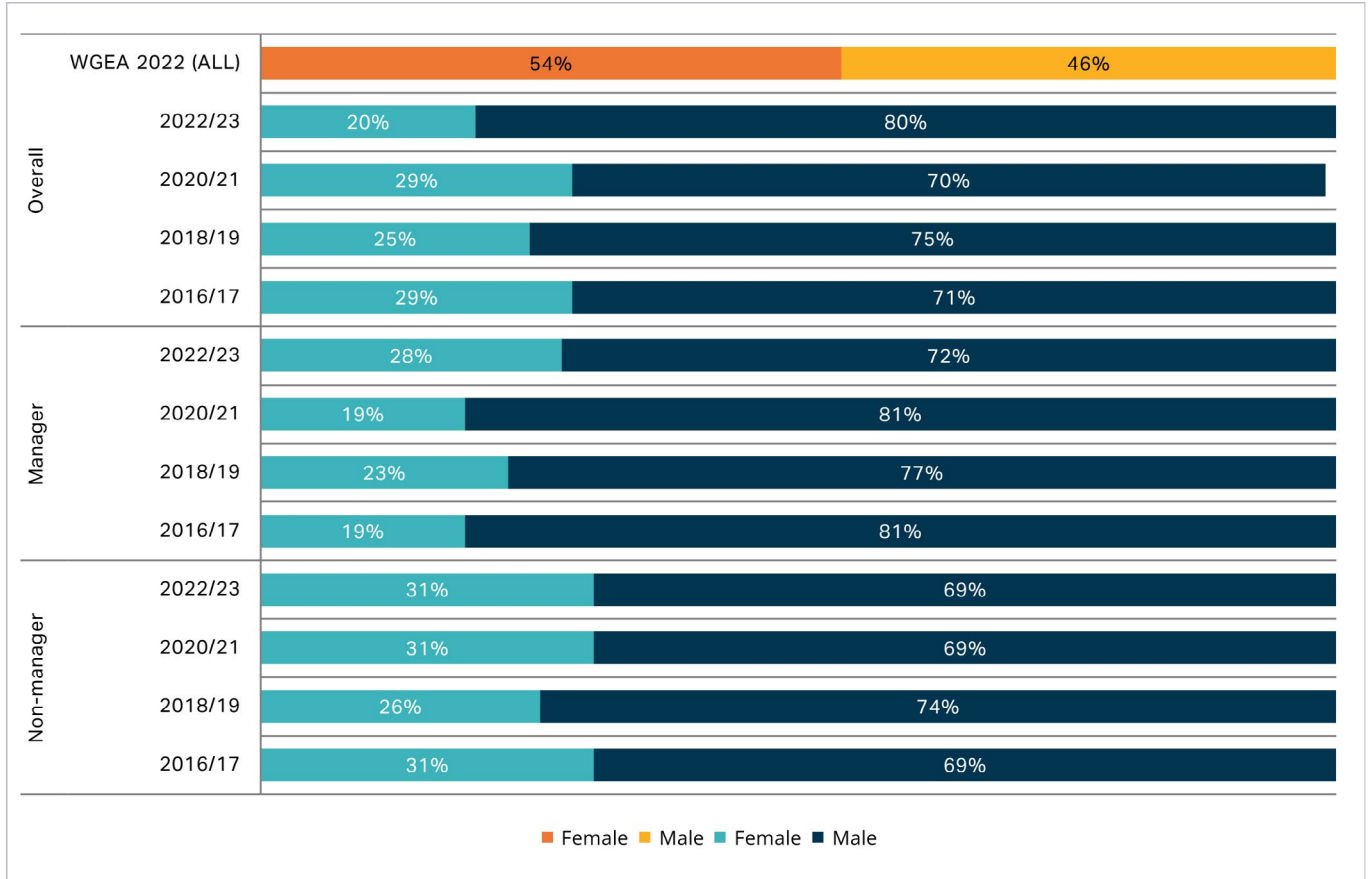


Figure 12: Gender breakdown of resignations by manager and non-manager positions



Policies and strategies to support gender equality

Eighty per cent of respondents have formal policies or strategies in place that specifically support gender diversity.

Eighty per cent of respondents have formal policies or strategies in place that specifically support gender diversity. Eighty-six per cent of those who indicated they had formal policies in place survey respondents also have specific recruitment policies or strategies to improve gender equity overall in their organisations, which is an improvement of six percentage points from 2020-21. In terms of formal policies in place, there is a significant difference in gender equality policies compared with those reported in the WGEA data. On average, the WGEA data shows that 86 per cent of respondents have formal policies surrounding performance management processes, whereas the average for the rail industry is only 47 per cent. A large policy gap remains in several areas including training and development, succession planning and talent identification.

Survey data highlights that the rail industry overtook the WGEA average for organisations having formal key performance indicators by 10 percentage points.

Table One: Proportion of respondents that have specific policies or strategies in place to support gender equality

Formal policies/strategies in place to support gender equality	WGEA 2023 (ALL)	Rail 2022/23	Rail 2020/21	Rail 2018/19	Rail 2016/17
Recruitment	88%	86% ▲	80%	86%	53%
Retention	70%	63% ▲	59%	53%	42%
Perf management processes	86%	57% ▲	44%	53%	42%
Promotions	73%	49% ▼	54%	58%	36%
Talent identification	73%	62% ▲	54%	61%	47%
Succession planning	72%	54% ▲	51%	61%	44%
Training & development	85%	60% ▲	59%	61%	44%
Key performance indicators	38%	49% ▲	39%	42%	33%
Gender equality overall	79%	77% ▼	80%	●	●

Member organisations were queried as to specific targets they had in place to address gender equality in their workplace. Eighty per cent of respondents had at least one policy in place with 55 per cent having a target to increase the number of women in management positions, 53 per cent per cent with a policy to increase the number of females in male-dominated roles and 43 per cent per cent aiming to reduce the organisation wide pay gap. Thirty-eight per cent of organisations identified they were actively working to increase the number of men who were utilising flexible working arrangements.

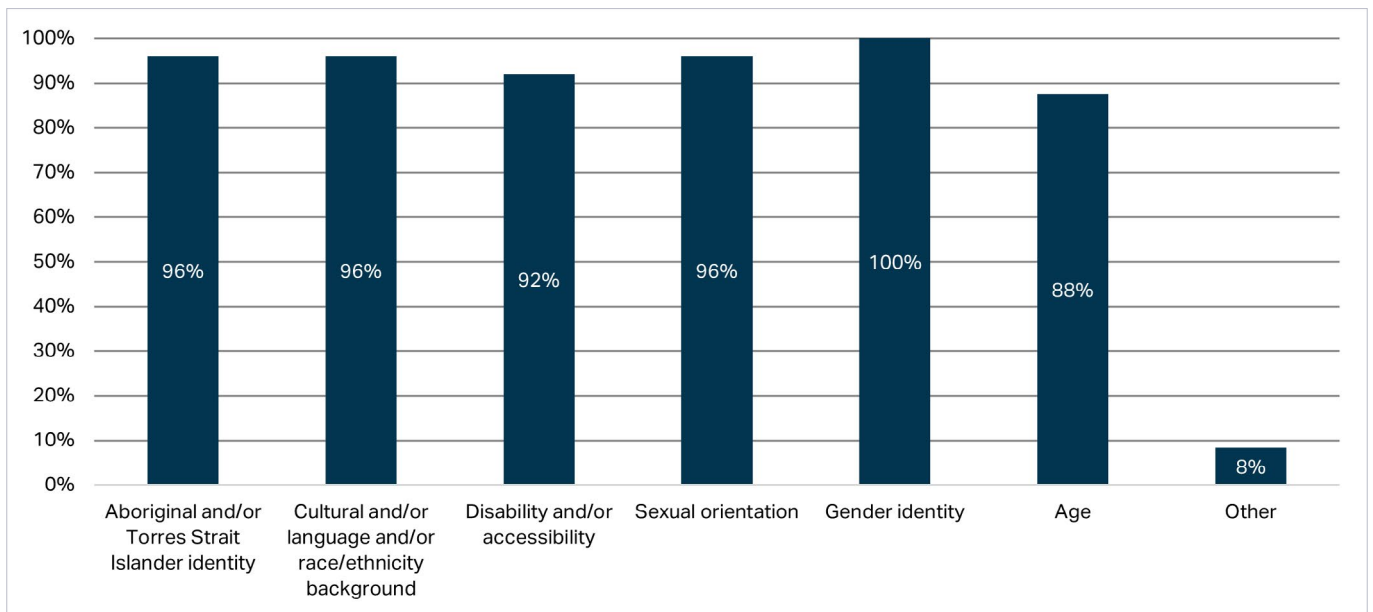


Figure 14: Proportion of respondents with specific equality targets in place

Gender composition of rail organisations' governing bodies³

Member organisations indicated that the governing bodies that primarily oversee the governance of their organisations have on average 30 per cent female representation, up from 26 per cent in 2020-21 and a significant increase from 2018-19 with 15 per cent of female representation on governing bodies. However, 14 per cent of females on governing bodies hold the position of Chair, which is a decline from 27 per cent in 2020-21.

Nine per cent of respondents indicated they have set targets to increase female representation on their governing bodies. However, of the respondents who do not have set targets, a majority have indicated this is due to having no control over governing body appointments.

Thirty-nine per cent of respondents indicated they had a formal policy and/or strategy on diversity and inclusions for their organisation's governing body. Of those respondents that indicated they had a formal policy, 75 per cent indicated it relates to Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders. Sixty-six per cent indicated they had a formal diversity policy on cultural and/or language and/or race/ethnicity, disability and/or accessibility, sexual orientation and gender identity.

Remuneration

Sixty-three per cent of respondents indicated that they have a formal policy in place regarding remuneration, and up to 80 per cent indicated they have specific gender pay equity objectives. The most common policy was ensuring no gender bias occurs at any stage of the remuneration review process, along with ensuring the performance assessment process remains transparent and rigorous. For those organisations that do not have a formal policy, they indicated that they are either: currently under development; the salaries are set by awards/ industrial or Workplace Agreements; that non-award employees are paid market rates; or they have insufficient resources.

Of those surveyed, 91 per cent of respondents had conducted a gender pay gap analysis within the last 24 months, up from 44 per cent since 2020-21.

Of those respondents who carried out an analysis of their remuneration policies, 85 per cent indicated action was taken after identifying the gaps. Actions taken following the analysis of remuneration policies include the creation of pay equity strategy, identification of the cause of gaps, further analysis of commencement salaries and performance pay.

³ A **governing body** means the body, or group of members of the employer, with primary responsibility for the governance of the employer.

Gender equality consultation

Sixty-three per cent of respondents have consulted with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace, up five percentage points from 2020-21.

Paid parental leave

Eighty-three per cent of respondents indicated that they provide employer-funded paid parental leave by paying the employee's full salary (in addition to the government's paid scheme), regardless of the period over which it is paid.

Of those that responded, 100 per cent indicated that paid parental leave was covered for birth, 94 per cent covered adoption, 75 per cent covered still birth and 72 per cent covered surrogacy

Twenty-one per cent of respondents who offer paid parental leave, pay the gap between the employee's salary and the government's paid parental leave scheme; 83 per cent pay the employee's full salary (in addition to the government's paid scheme), regardless of the period of time over which it is paid.

Of those organisations that provide paid parental leave, they all provide employee funded paid parental leave of 14 weeks to females, but only 90 per cent provide 14 weeks to men.

Seventy per cent of organisations indicated they make superannuation contributions to employees on employer-funded parental leave, eight per cent contribute when employees are on government-funded parental leave and 11 per cent contribute on unpaid parental leave.



Flexible working arrangements

Seventy-nine per cent of respondents have formal policies or strategies for flexible working arrangements. There is an increased proportion of organisation's who provide flexible workplace strategies across all the various aspects as in Table 2 below.

Table two: Proportion of organisations who have the following flexible workplace strategies

	2022/23	2020/21	2018/19
A business case for flexibility has been established and endorsed at the leadership level	63% ▲	54%	36%
Flexible working is promoted throughout the organisation	86% ▲	81%	80%
Targets have been set for engagement in flexible work	17% ▲	12%	0%
Targets have been set for men's engagement in flexible work	11% ▼	12%	0%
Leaders are held accountable for improving workplace flexibility	40% ▲	31%	28%
Manager training on flexible working is provided throughout the organisation	31% ▲	27%	16%
Employee training is provided through the organisation	31% ▲	15%	12%
Employees are surveyed on whether they have sufficient flexibility	51% ▼	58%	52%
The organisation's approach to flexibility is integrated into client conversations	37% ▲	23%	20%
The impact of flexibility is evaluated (e.g. reduced absenteeism, increased employee engagement)	29% ▼	42%	32%
Metrics on the use of, and/or the impact of, flexibility measures are reported to key management personnel	34% ▼	42%	24%
Metrics on the use of, and/or the impact of, flexibility measures are reported to the governing body/board	31% ▼	35%	16%

There has been major improvement in some areas of flexible workplace strategies, most notably the establishment of business case strategies, promotion and target setting of flexible working. There was an improvement in leadership being held accountable for improving workplace flexibility along with workplace training.

Fifty-six per cent of respondents offer additional support mechanisms other than leave for employees with family or caring responsibilities, which for the majority includes breastfeeding facilities. However, 43 per cent that do not currently have these support mechanisms have them under development.

When queried regarding which initiatives were present in their organisation's flexible working arrangement strategy, 86 per cent of member organisations shared that flexible working arrangements are promoted throughout the organisation, whilst 69 per cent of respondents shared that their leadership team are role models for displaying flexible working practices.

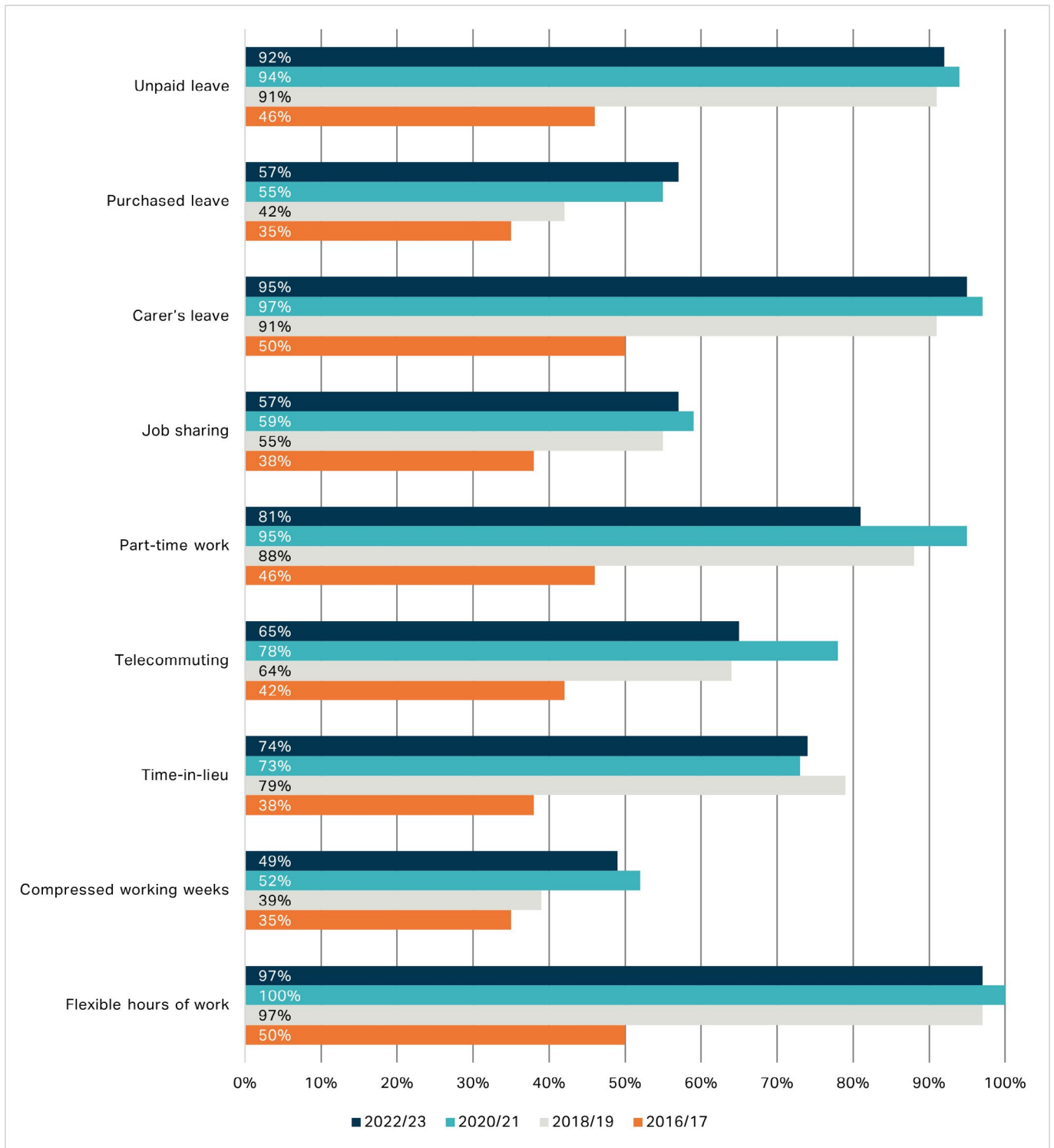


Figure 15: Availability of flexible workplace arrangements

Sixty-six per cent of respondents reported seeing an increase in the approval of formal flexible working arrangements since COVID-19. Fifty-seven per cent of respondents confirmed an increase in the approval of formal flexible working arrangements compared with prior to COVID-19.

Respondents were also queried whether they offered any additional support mechanism for employees with family or caring responsibilities. Of the 19 who indicated yes, 58 per cent offered breastfeeding facilities, and 32 per cent offered return to work support and coaching targeting employees returning from parental leave or carers leave.

Hybrid teams

Of those workplaces with hybrid working arrangements, specifically for those who have team members working remotely, we are seeing an increasing trend in employers beginning to implement measures to ensure the fair treatment of all employees regardless of work location.

Fifty per cent of employers are measuring employee performance by performance and not presenteeism. Training has also been provided for all employees including managers on how to work with flexible, remote and hybrid working teams.

Family and domestic violence

Seventy-seven per cent of respondent organisations have a formal policy/strategy to support employees who are experiencing family or domestic violence, an increase of 16 percentage points since 2020-21. Of those organisations that did not have a formal strategy, they indicated that it was either currently under development, was included in their workplace agreement or they would manage these needs on an individual basis.

Seventy per cent of respondents indicated they had one or more of the below listed support mechanisms in place to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence.

Table three: Proportion of organisations who have the following support mechanisms in place to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence

Measures offered	WGEA 2022	2022/23	2020/21
Employee assistance program	93%	88% ▲	70%
HR or other staff training	48%	72% ▲	52%
Referral to support services	87%	83% ▲	57%
Paid domestic violence leave	61%	72% ▲	52%
Unpaid domestic violence leave	55%	70% ▲	48%
Unpaid leave	91%	95% ▲	68%
Domestic violence clause in an enterprise or workplace agreement	53%	54% ▲	45%
Workplace safety planning	61%	82% ▲	61%
Confidentiality of disclosure	96%	98% ▲	75%
Protection from adverse action or discrimination	93%	87% ▲	59%
Flexible working arrangements	97%	90% ▲	70%
Financial support	53%	44% ▲	25%
Change of office location	68%	84% ▲	48%
Emergency accommodation assistance	25%	29% ▲	20%
Medical services	45%	37% ▲	32%

Those respondents who do not have these support mechanisms currently available, they have revealed it is due to a lack of resources, or not being aware of the need for additional measures. Respondents shared it has not previously been considered, but they would consider it should the need arise, and many respondents indicated such policies are currently under development.

Sex-based harassment and discrimination

Ninety per cent of respondent organisations have a formal policy/strategy on sex-based harassment and discrimination prevention which is a significant 15 percentage point increase from 2020-21.

Eighty-eight per cent of respondent organisations provide a grievance process in any sex-based harassment and discrimination prevention formal policy, up from 73 per cent in 2020-21.

Seventy-five per cent of respondent organisations provide training on sex-based harassment and discrimination prevention to all employees. Sixty-eight per cent of those organisations provide this training as part of their induction process, and 54 per cent of these organisations repeat this training either annually or every two years.

Understanding the data

When respondents were asked what the main challenges were in addressing gender inclusion in their workplace, many respondents highlighted similar challenges in the industry as done in previous years. Attracting females into rail apprenticeships remains a key challenge, along with attracting women to labour and engineering roles specifically.

A lack of rail training within the rail sector remains a challenge, and the availability of skilled or qualified candidates in general is extremely limited. With even less females available for current roles, this in turn is limiting the number of females in the rail workforce. Many organisations indicated they have no biases or issues hiring women and gender diverse people, they just do not receive many applications.

The ARA has partnered with the National Women in Transport group to engage Diversity Partners to conduct research looking into how to enhance gender diversity across the rail industry, including attracting women to rail, retaining women in rail, and fostering continuous development of women into leadership and management roles.

This research will complement the findings of the WGEA data and provide further insight into the data gathered.





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