

#### Women in Media Industry Insight Report 2025

Annual survey of women working in diverse media roles across Australia





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#### **Foreword**

The Women in Media Industry Insight Report 2025 delivers a stark but vital snapshot of the experience of women working in Australia's media sector. Drawing on national data across career stages and disciplines, it captures a workforce increasingly disillusioned by a disconnect between promise and progress.

This year, career dissatisfaction among women in media reached its highest level in four years, with 59% feeling stalled or uncertain about their advancement. Mid-career and senior professionals, in particular, are questioning their futures, citing a lack of opportunity, support and visible commitment to gender equality.

Despite legislative and policy reforms such as WGEA pay transparency reporting and Respect@Work, most women remain unaware of how these are being implemented or experienced within their workplaces. Structural barriers persist, with women making up nearly half the sector but only 30% of leadership roles.

Progress depends on transparency and intent. Understanding the root causes of inequality, analysing the data and openly communicating plans builds trust and accountability.

Women in Media is committed to amplifying women's voices and working with employers to build safer, more equitable workplaces. This report is a call to listen, act and stay the course, because meaningful change takes more than policy; it requires cultural and operational shifts aligned with women's experience.







#### Introduction

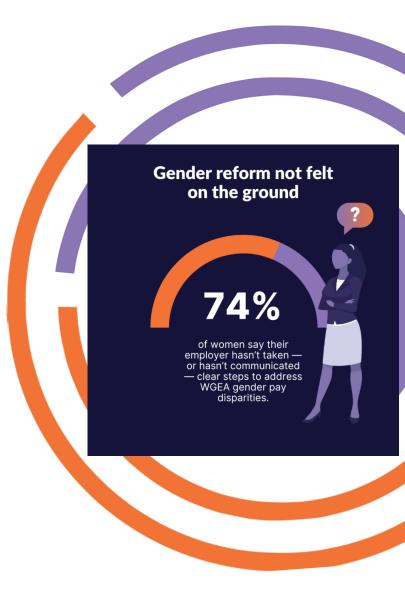
Each year, Women in Media surveys professionals nationally who work in diverse areas of media, from journalism, communications, PR and digital media to advertising, marketing, publishing and production to track their experience in the workplace.

The 2025 report shows a worsening trend: career dissatisfaction is at a new high, with more women considering leaving their jobs and fewer seeing viable pathways to progress. The data reflects mounting frustration, particularly from mid-career professionals who report declining support and a perceived lack of meaningful reform.

This year's findings confirm that while public policy is shifting, workplace culture is struggling to keep pace. If employers are serious about retaining talent and fostering equity, the sector must focus on practical implementation, leadership accountability and transparent communication.

A key part of addressing gender equity is understanding how gender pay gaps and workplace inequalities are perceived and sometimes misunderstood within organisations. Closing the gap and achieving workplace equality is a long-term project, with an evolving evidence base.

Gender inequality is often systemic and industry-wide, not just a workplace issue. As a sector that shapes public perception, the media plays a powerful role in how Australians see themselves, hear diverse voices and understand gendered experiences. Progress requires coordinated industry leadership to improve representation and drive structural change.



#### Media's Role in Shaping Perceptions and Leading Progress



Petra Buchanan Strategic Advisor

Report author and Women in Media Strategic Advisor Petra Buchanan emphasised the media sector's powerful role in shaping the public perception of how Australians see themselves, hear diverse voices, and interpret gendered experiences.

"This year's report shows women are unconvinced by gender equality efforts. They want action," Buchanan said. She noted that employers have a critical opportunity to not only strengthen their internal approaches but also work collectively to address shared challenges.

"Transparency reforms like WGEA's pay reporting provide a vital platform, but they must be matched by visible, on-the-ground change. Seventy four per cent of women say they haven't seen clear progress or communication from their employers addressing gender disparities.

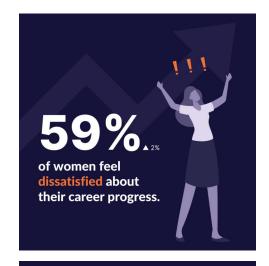
"Women are calling on media employers to lead with intent and communicate how they are addressing workplace issues, from closing the gender pay gap to implementing meaningful structural and cultural reform. Employer and industry action is essential to address inequity and ensure women thrive."

#### **Summary - 2025 Key Findings**

For the fourth year in a row the *Women in Media Industry Insight Report* examines career roadblocks, with pay topping the list as a main concern. The Report gives women a voice to share the challenges and obstacles they face, and the positive changes that would make them stay and thrive in their careers.

- Career dissatisfaction has climbed to 59%, a four-year high
- One in three women (37%) considering quitting, up 3% from 2024
- Pay (29%), lack of growth opportunities (26%) and disengagement (16%) are the top reasons for leaving
- Mid-career women (5 to 10 years' experience) are the most disillusioned,
   with 64% rating gender equality efforts as weak
- Workplace culture changes linked to Respect@Work reforms remain limited: 78% say they have seen no change

Women continue to face daily pressures citing budget cuts and heavy workloads, and a lack of access to career pathways. Systemic challenges are driving talent out of the industry. Retention hinges on three critical factors: pay equity, clear pathways for career growth, and visible, accountable leadership.







#### **Summary - Multi-Year Trends**

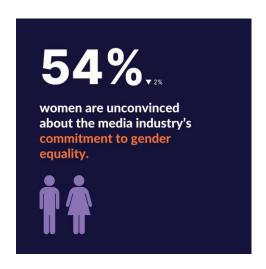
#### Multi-Year Trends (2022–2025)

Indicator	2022	2023	2024	2025
Career dissatisfaction	<b>56</b> %	<b>54</b> %	<b>57</b> %	59% ▲ 2%
Weak industry commitment to equality	-	<b>55</b> %	<b>56</b> %	54% ▼2%
Considering leaving job	-	32%	34%	37% ▲3%
Pay as primary reason to leave	<b>27</b> %	23%	26%	29% ▲3%
Media industry gender pay gap (avg)	_	_	_	10%

#### Top barriers for women over the course of their careers

- Pay
- Lack of promotional opportunities
- Caregiving/household responsibilities
- · Lack of managerial support

Respondents said better pay and growth and promotional opportunities would make them stay; the same reasons cited most for leaving.





#### **Call to Action**

Employers have a critical role to play.

- Commitment to Gender Equality: Enhance transparency and commitment to gender equality in the workplace, including pay
- Clearer pathways to Promotion: Define and communicate career opportunities to aid progression
- Stay the Course: Maintain focus on reforms and close the communication gap
- **Elevate Women:** Increase leadership participation to tackle persistent structural imbalance

These findings underscore the urgency for change. Building an equitable media industry means listening to women and acting on what we hear.





# What is your assessment of the media industry commitment to gender equality?

Mid-career women feel the most let down

64%

of women with 5-10 years' experience say the media industry shows weak commitment to gender equality — the highest of any group.

### Confidence in Media's Gender Equality Commitment Remains Weak



54% (▼2%)
see weak commitment to
gender equality in the
media industry.

The majority of respondents assessed the current commitment of the media industry to gender equality as either somewhat weak (42%, ▼ 1%) or very weak (12%, ▼ 1%).

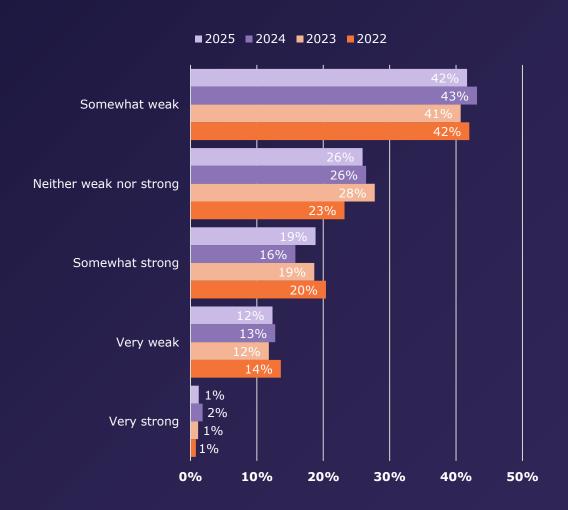
2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263, 2022 n = 250



What is your assessment of the media industry commitment to gender equality?

# Women Remain Unconvinced by Industry's Gender Equality Efforts

The majority of women surveyed considered the media industry's commitment to gender equality somewhat or very weak.

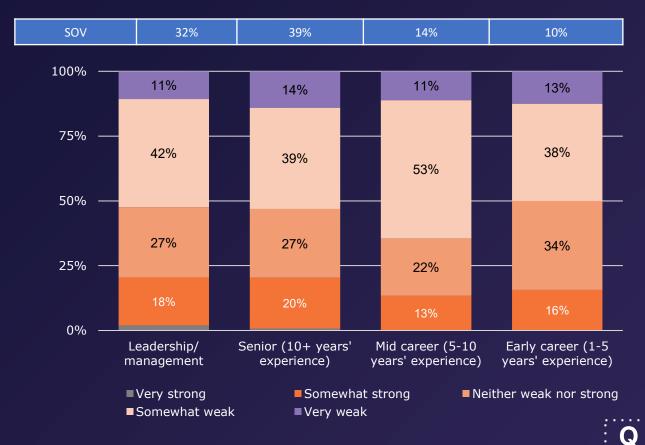


2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263, 2022 n = 250



#### **Mid-Career Professionals Most Disillusioned**

Women with 5-10 years' experience view the media industry's gender equality commitment as weak.



64% of mid-career women (5–10 years') rate the commitment as weak — the highest of any group.

Perceptions of weak commitment persist across all career stages, with discontent peaking among those in mid-career.

While early-career respondents also express concern, mid-career talent may feel the greatest mismatch between expectations and lived experience marking a potential risk for retention and progression.

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263, 2022 n = 250 (not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question in 2022)



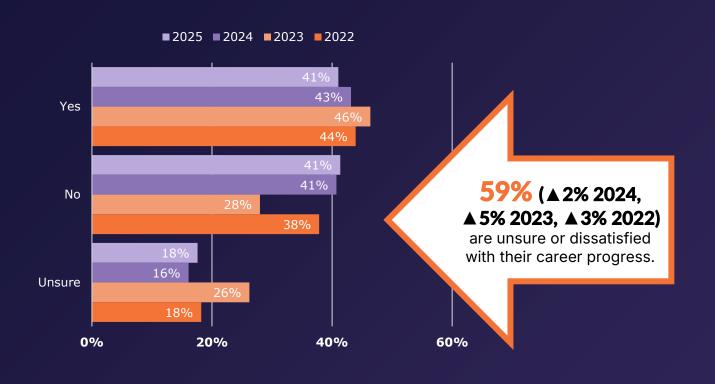
What is your assessment of the media industry commitment to gender equality?

## Is your career progressing at the rate you would like?



#### **Career Dissatisfaction Hits Four-Year High**

Most women 59% (▲ 2%) are unsure or explicitly dissatisfied with the progress of their careers.



The level of dissatisfaction with career progress remained steadily high in 2025

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263, 2022 n = 280

Q Is your career progressing at the rate you would like?

#### **Career Dissatisfaction Cycle - Drivers to Leave & Stay**

Pay, opportunity and support are top concerns.

Q: Is your career progressing at the rate you would like?

41% YES (▼2%)

59% NO / UNSURE (A 2%) Career dissatisfaction reaches
FOUR-YEAR
HIGH
for women in media

#### WHY NOT?

- 1. LACK OF OPPs (45% ▲7%)
- 2. CAREGIVING / HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES (19% ▲1%)
- 3. LACK OF SUPPORT (17% ▼3%)

#### **DRIVERS TO LEAVE**

- 1. PAY (29%▲3%)
- 2. LACK OF GROWTH OPPs (26% ▲ 4%)
- 3. DISENGAGEMENT / NOT FEELING CHALLENGED (16% ▼1%)

#### **DRIVERS TO STAY**

- : 1. BETTER PAY (30%▲6%)
- 2. GROWTH OPPs (24% ▲ 1%)
- 3. JOB SECURITY (12%▲6%)

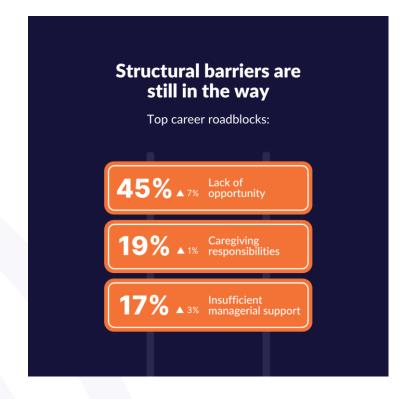
#### WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO

- 1. GENDER PAY AUDITS (63% ▼6%)
- 2. BETTER LEARNING DEV (56% ▲3%)
- 3. GENDER TARGETS / QUOTAS (44% no change)

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263



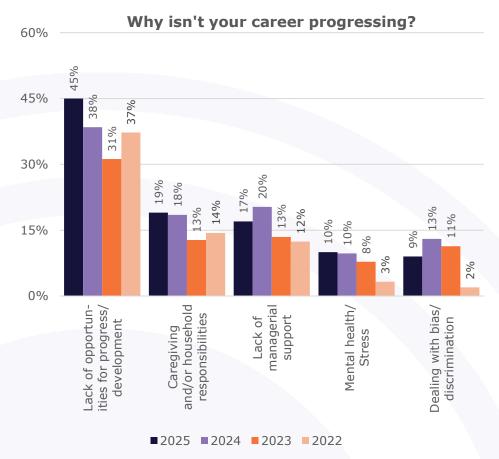
## Why isn't your career progressing at the rate you would like?





## Lack of Career Opportunities Remains Top Barrier to Career Progress

In 2025, 45% of women cited lack of opportunities for progress and development as the main reason their careers aren't progressing — the highest rate in four years.



#### **Top Three Reasons for Career Stagnation**

- 1. Lack of opportunities
- 2. Caregiving/household responsibilities
- 3. Lack of managerial support

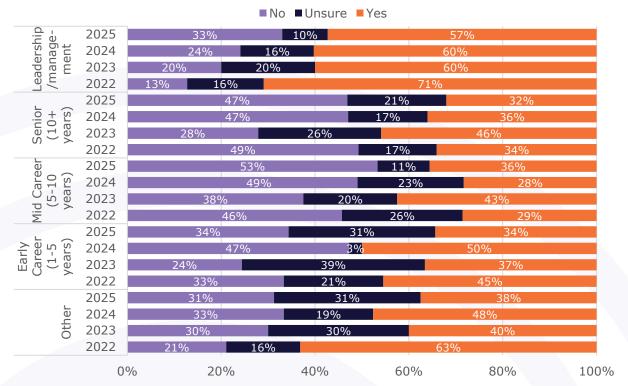
Q Why isn't your career progressing at the rate you would like?

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 187, 2023 n = 141, 2022 n = 153 (not all survey respondents shared details on what were the main obstacles to their career progress)



## **Confidence in Progress Drops Across All Career Stages**

Fewer women feel their careers are progressing at the right pace, with rising uncertainty across every career stage.



% of women satisfied with the rate their career is progressing (within each career stage)

Q Is your career progressing at the rate you would like?

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263, 2022 n = 280



WOMEN IN MEDIA INDUSTRY INSIGHT REPORT 2025

57%

**(**▼3%)

of women in leadership positions feel their careers are on track in 2025. This drops to 32% for senior women and 36% for midcareer women. 53%

**▲** 4%)

of mid-career women said their career was not progressing at the rate they would like, as did 34% (▼ 10%) of early-career women.

Women in leadership and mid-career roles are now more likely to report dissatisfaction or uncertainty than progress.

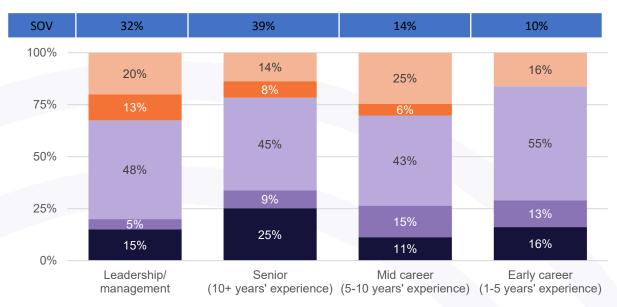
#### **Uncertainty**

**▲** 28%

Growing uncertainty about career progress within early career women.

#### **Lack of Opportunity Unifying Barrier to Career Progress**

Senior women report caregiving, while mid-career and leaders call out a lack of managerial support.



Senior women (10+ years) and Leadership report caregiving as the second most pressing hindrance to career progress.

Early career women are the most likely to feel blocked before they even begin, with 55% citing no opportunity to progress.

For mid-career women, the challenge is amplified by a lack of managerial support.

- Lack of managerial support
- Dealing with gender bias/discrimination
- Currently there aren't any opportunities for me to progress in my organisation
- ■I am experiencing mental or physical health problems that are impacting my ability to progress
- Caregiving and/or household responsibilities are making it difficult for me to progress with my career

Why isn't your career progressing at the rate you would like?

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 187, 2023 n = 141, 2022 n = 153 (not all survey respondents shared details on what were the main obstacles to their career progress)

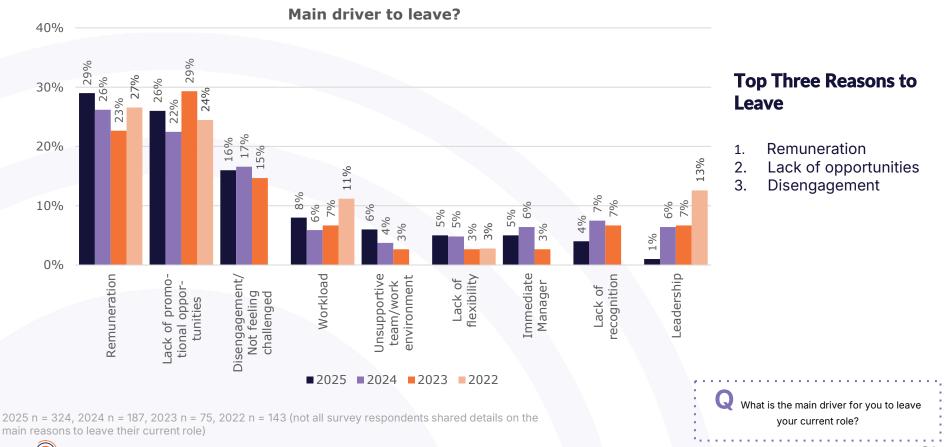


## What is the main driver for you to leave your current role?



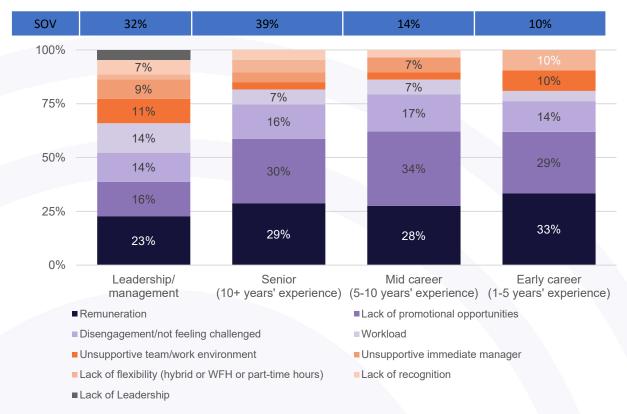
#### Remuneration Top Reason for Leaving Media Jobs

Better pay outpaced other motivations as reasons to both stay (▲6%) and leave (▲3%), highlighting a disconnect between current salaries and rising financial pressures. For many, higher pay is an immediate need, not just a future goal.



## Pay, Progress and Disengagement Top Reasons Why Women Leave by Career Stage

These reasons are linked factors that drive women to leave a role.



2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 187, 2023 n = 75, 2022 n = 143 (not all survey respondents shared details on the main reasons to leave their current role)

#### **Early Career**

33% leave for better pay — the highest across all stages. 29% cite lack of promotion, and 14% feel disengaged.

#### **Mid-Career**

34% cite lack of promotional opportunities, the highest figure for this reason. 28% leave for pay, and 17% due to disengagement.

#### **Senior**

30% point to limited advancement, nearly matched by 29% citing pay. 16% report disengagement, reflecting motivation loss at the top.

#### Leadership/Management

While pay (23%) and promotion (16%) are leading drivers, 14% cite disengagement, and 14% cite workload — the highest workload concern across all levels.

What is the main driver for you to leave your current role?

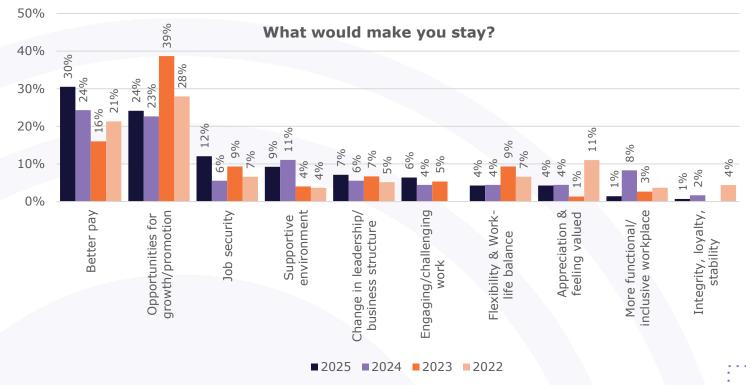
#### What would make you stay?





#### The Same Reasons Women Stay Are Why They Leave

30% ( $\triangle$ 6%) of women in 2025 said better pay and 24% ( $\triangle$ 1%) growth and promotional opportunities would make them stay — the same reasons cited most for leaving.



Job growth and promotion opportunities are just as crucial as higher pay in order to retain women.

Other top stay factors included job security (12%) and a supportive environment (9%).

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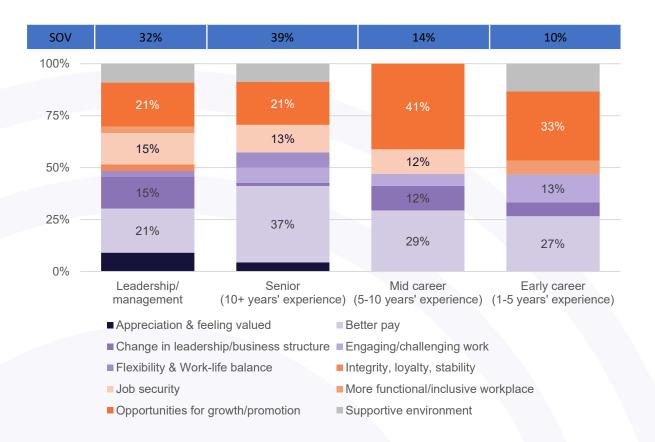
What would make you stay?

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 181, 2023 n = 75, 2022 n = 136 (not all survey respondents shared what would make them stay in their current job)



## What Keeps Women from Leaving Isn't One-Size-Fits-All — Career Stage Matters

Senior women and leadership prioritise pay, mid-career professionals seek growth, and early career talent values growth and pay.



#### **Early Career**

Top reasons to stay: growth (33%), pay (27%), and support (13%).

#### Mid-Career

41% want growth opportunities, the highest across all groups. Also value pay (29%) and job security (12%) and change in leadership/business structure (12%).

#### **Senior**

Pay (37%) is the top priority, the highest of any group, followed by growth (21%) and job security (13%).

#### Leadership/Management

Top drivers: Pay (21%) and growth (21%), followed by feeling valued (15%) and changes in leadership/business structure.

What would make you stay?

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 181, 2023 n = 75, 2022 n = 136 (not all survey respondents shared what would make them stay in their current job)

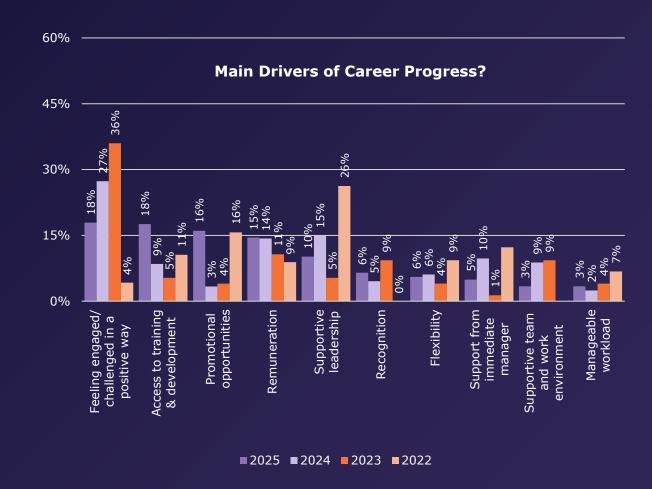


## What are the main drivers for your career progress?



# Career Progress is Fuelled by Challenge, Not Just Pay

In 2025, women most valued feeling engaged (18%) and access to training (18%) over remuneration (11%) when it comes to moving forward.



2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 75, 2022 n = 241 (not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question)



What are the main drivers for your career progress?

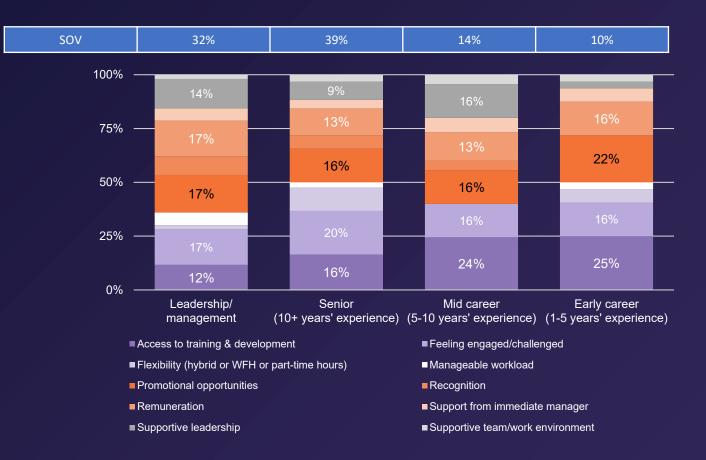
# Motivations Shift with Seniority

Early career women prioritise training (25%) and promotional opportunities (22%).

For **mid-career**, training (24%), promotional opportunities (16%) and engagement (16%) lead.

**Senior** women value engagement (20%) followed by promotional opportunities (16%) and training (16%).

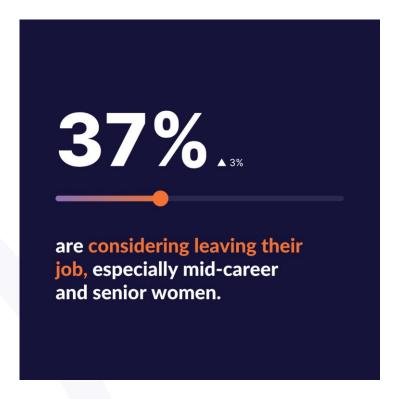
**Leaders** focus equally on pay (17%), promotional opportunities (17%) and feeling engaged (17%).



 $2025\ n$  = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 75, 2022 n = 241 (not all survey respondents provided an answer to this question)

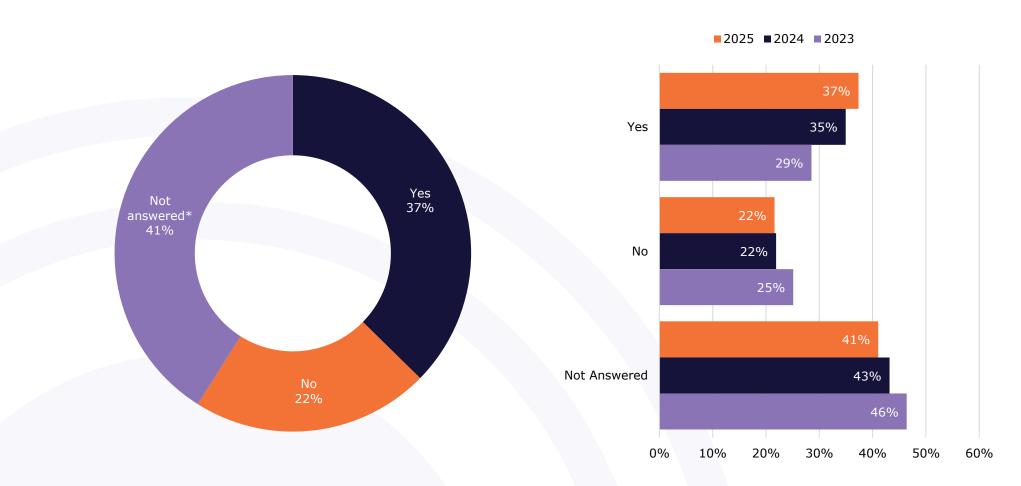


# Are you thinking about leaving your current role in the next 12 months?



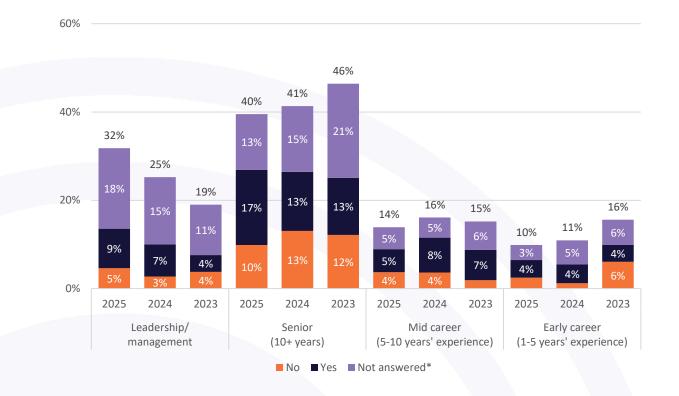
#### More Than One-Third of Women Eyeing the Exit

37% of women are considering leaving their roles, up ▲2% from last year



#### **Senior Women Report Lowest Career Satisfaction**

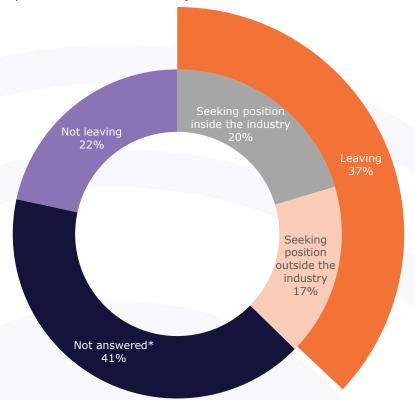
Looking at respondents' career stages provides deeper insight into levels of job satisfaction. More senior women plan to leave (17%) than stay (10%). One in three mid-career women are also looking to move on in the next 12 months.

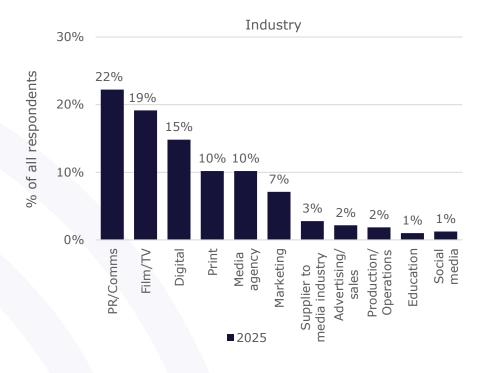


Retention challenges are mounting as experienced women lose faith in career progression with a lack of workplace support posing a risk to future leadership continuity.

# Growing Industry Attrition Risk as Women Consider New Positions Inside and Outside of the Media Sector.

This marks a shift toward the public relations and communications profession, identified by 22% of respondents as the industry that best describes their work.





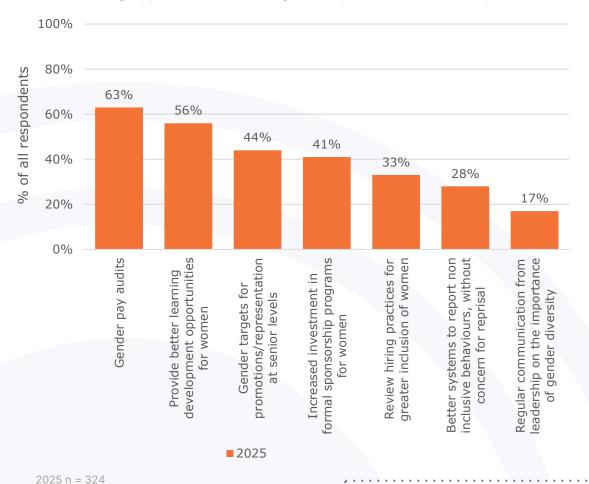


#### **Urgent issues to be addressed**



## Call for Pay Audits and Better Learning and Development

When asked about key issues the industry needed to address, respondents identified gender pay audits, better learning opportunities and targets for promotion/leadership.



63%

of surveyed women strongly believe that **gender pay audits** are the main issue that employers need to address.

56%

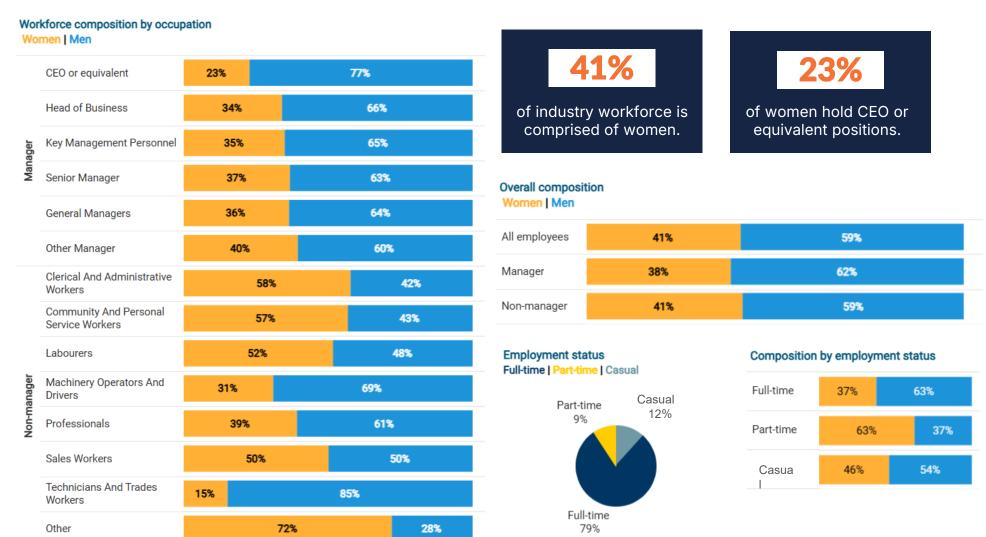
of respondents strongly favour better learning and development opportunities to address gender imbalance issues.

#### Women's Participation in Media Declines as Careers Progress





Women comprise 41% of the media workforce but this drops to 23% of the most senior positions.



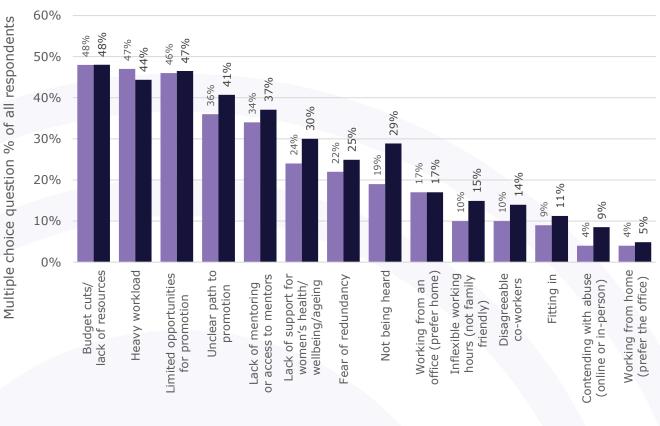


## What issues / challenges do you face day-to-day?



### Three Core Issues Create Structural **Barriers Hindering Women's Progress**

From budget cuts and limited opportunities to heavy workloads, nearly half of women face persistent structural blockers, while a growing number highlight daily stressors like lack of mentorship and support for health and wellbeing.



(no change)

Cite lack of resources and budget cuts as a daily challenge.

heavy workload nearly just as significant a workplace barrier.

of the surveyed women in 2025 see limited opportunities for promotion as an issue they face on a daily basis.

2025

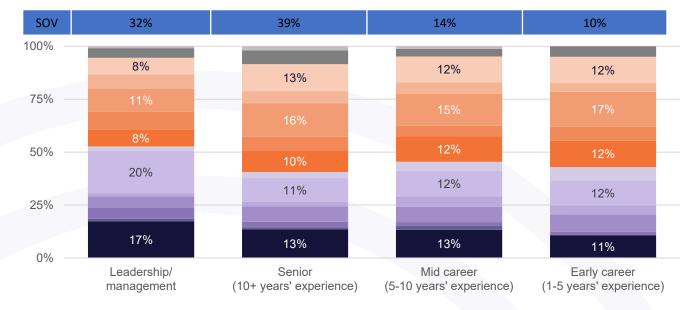
**2024** 

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263



### **Limited Opportunities for Promotion a Constant Challenge Across Career Stage**

The leading day-to-day issues for women in the industry continue to be limited opportunities to promotion across every stage, except for those in leadership who call out heavy workload.



- Budget cuts or lack of resources to do my job
- Disagreeable co-workers
- Fitting in
- Inflexible working hours
- Lack of support for women's health/wellbeing/ageing
- Not being heard
- Working from an office (prefer to be working from home)

- Contending with abuse (online or in-person)
- Fear of redundancy
- Heavy workload
- Lack of mentoring or access to mentors
- Limited opportunities for promotion
- Unclear path to promotion
- Working from home (prefer to be in the office)

2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329, 2023 n = 263



What issues / challenges do you face day-to-day?

#### **Early Career**

The top daily friction is limited opportunities for promotion (17%), followed equally by a lack of mentoring (12%), an unclear path to promotion (12%) and heavy workload (12%).

#### Mid-Career

Similar to early career women, this group is most affected by limited opportunities for promotion (15%), followed by a budget cuts or a lack of resources (13%).

#### **Senior**

Limited opportunities for promotion (16%) top the list of challenges followed by a lack of resources (13%) and an unclear path to promotion (13%).

#### Leadership/Management

The biggest daily challenge is heavy workload at 20%, followed by budget cuts or a lack of resources 17% and limited opportunities for promotion at 11%.

# What type of learning would be most beneficial to progressing your career?



## Women Want Professional Development to Build Networks, Personal Brand and Clarify Career Goals

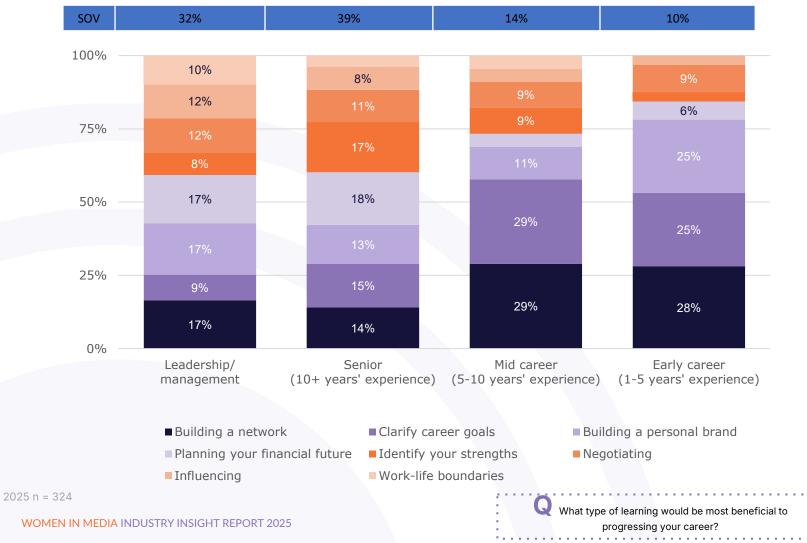
Nearly 1 in 5 women say building a network is their top development need, followed by shaping their personal brand (16%) and clarifying career goals (15%).

30%



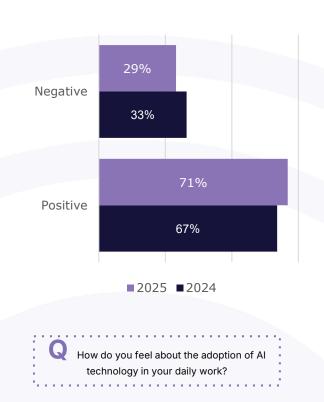
#### **Development Priorities Shift as Women Rise**

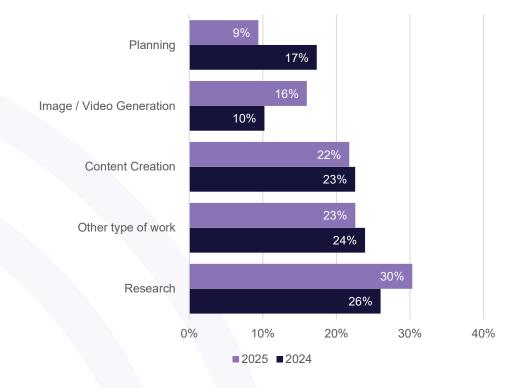
Emphasis changes from networking and goal-setting in mid career to identifying your strengths and financial acumen as women rise in their careers.



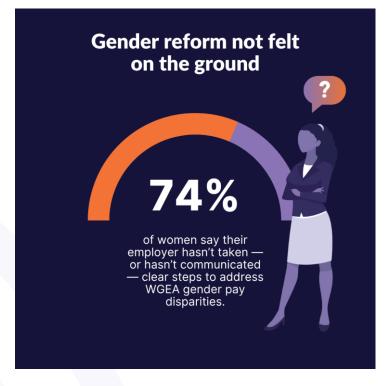
# Growing Use of Artificial Intelligence for Work, Especially in Research and Content Creation

Nearly three-quarters of women 71% feel positive about using AI professionally (▲4%), with more than half applying it to research and storytelling tasks. Use is expanding into decision support, narration, and multilingual content delivery.



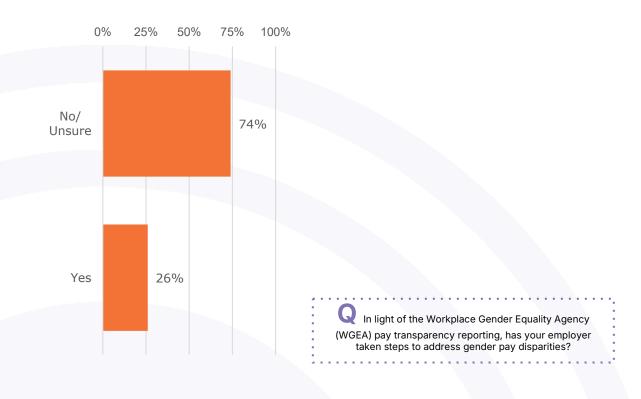


# Views on structural reform and impact





# 74% of Women Say Their Employer Hasn't Taken Clear Steps or Communicated How They Plan to Address Gender Pay Gaps



74%

of women expressed their employer has not clearly communicated or taken action to address gender pay disparities

26%

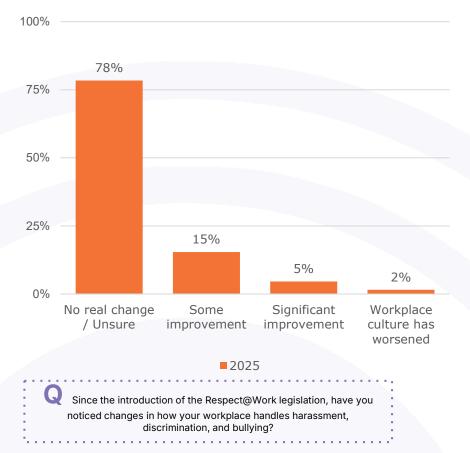
of women are aware of their employer's acknowledgment and action to address gender pay disparities

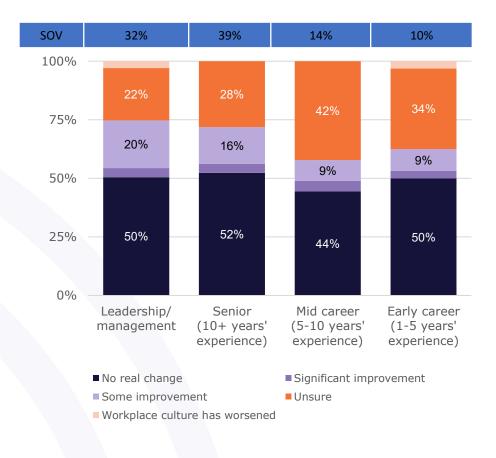
\*Source: https://www.wgea.gov.au/data-statistics/data-explorer



### Majority Don't Perceive a Shift in Workplace Progress from Recent Reforms

While 78% report no shift in how workplaces handle harassment or discrimination, 20% say their organisation has made progress, highlighting early signs of Respect@Work implementation.



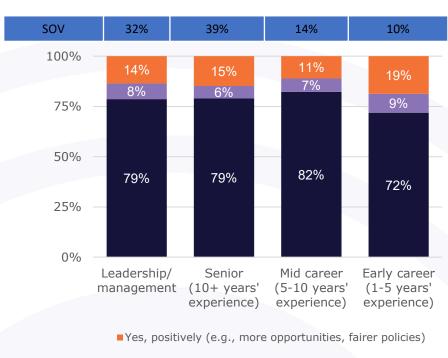




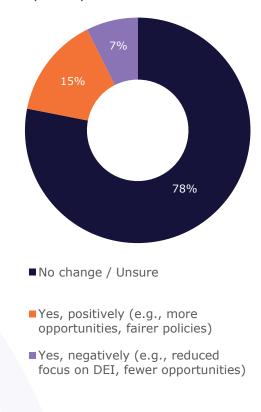
2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329

# Significant Majority of Women See No Change in Attitudes to DEI Affecting Their Career Opportunities or Workplace Experience

78% of women see no change or are unsure about recent attitude shifts in DEI and 15% report a positive shift.



- Yes, negatively (e.g., reduced focus on DEI, fewer opportunities)
- ■No change / Unsure



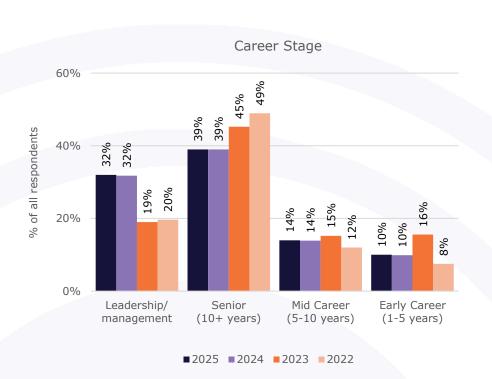
Have recent shifts in attitudes towards diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) affected your career opportunities, pay, or workplace experience?

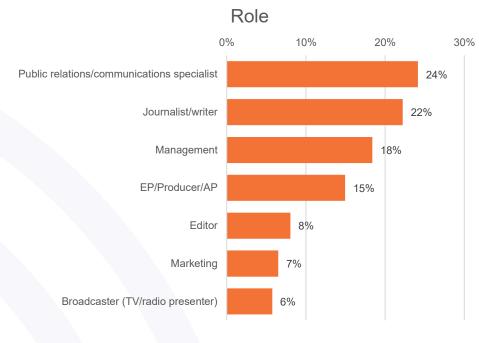




## Professional Roles Within the Media Industry Continue to Adapt

Unlike other traditional sources of media, such as print and radio, work in the film and television industry rebounded in 2025. Jobs in public relations or communications continue to grow over time.





2025 n = 324, 2024 n = 329

### Methodology

The Women in Media Industry Insight Report 2025 provides quantitative insights into women's views of working in the media industry.

The 2025 report collected responses from 324 participants from across Australia. It is a statistically robust national data sample and measures views of women working in media in Australia.

Apart from New South Wales and Victoria (which were over and underrepresented within a margin of 10%, respectively), the proportion of survey respondents living in each state did not differ significantly from the population proportions reported in the latest 2023 Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data.

The survey data is based on a voluntary response sample with a margin of error of 5.72%.

Survey analysis was conducted by research partner Isentia.

### Highlighting Women's Voices

The Women in Media Industry
Insight Report 2025 is a clear call to
action, as career dissatisfaction
among professional women in
media climbs to its highest level
in four years.

#### **Terminology**

Leadership = Management roles Senior = 10+ years' experience Mid-career = 5-10 years' experience Early career = 1-5 years' experience







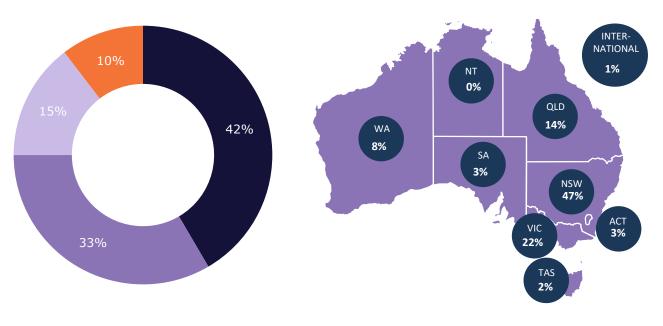
Women in Media is a national DGR registered charity for women working in all forms of media, including journalism, communications, production, public relations, advertising, marketing, publishing and digital media.

- 6700+ subscribers across the diverse media landscape.
- Committees in every state and territory.
- Helping women excel, learn, contribute, and connect.
- Creates opportunities and connections that are crucial to shaping women's career advancement and recognition.

We aim to increase gender equity, extend leadership and economic participation opportunities for women, and build a safer, more respectful culture in Australian workplaces.

#### Women in Media - Who We Are

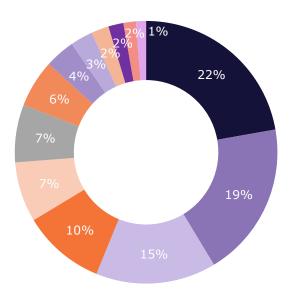
Our network includes more than 6,700 experienced media professionals in a range of industries across Australia.





- Leadership/management
- Mid career (5-10 years' experience)
- Early career (1-5 years' experience)





- PR/Comms
- Film / TV
- Digital
- Print
- Radio
- Marketing ■ Media Agency (Australian independent)
- Media Agency (global holding company) ■ Supplier to media industry, professional services, consulting, legal
- Advertising/sales
- Production/Operations
- Education
- Social media



2025 n = 324





womeninmedia.com.au