

: women, equity, architecture.

# The numbers in a nutshell:

Women in Architecture, Australia

Parlour works with data to reveal the shape of the profession and the participation of women within it. This helps make women visible, while also pointing to structural problems that must be addressed.

We provide this summary to assist others advocating for gender equity within their own professional context.

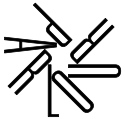
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Prepared by  
Dr Gill Matthewson

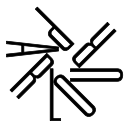
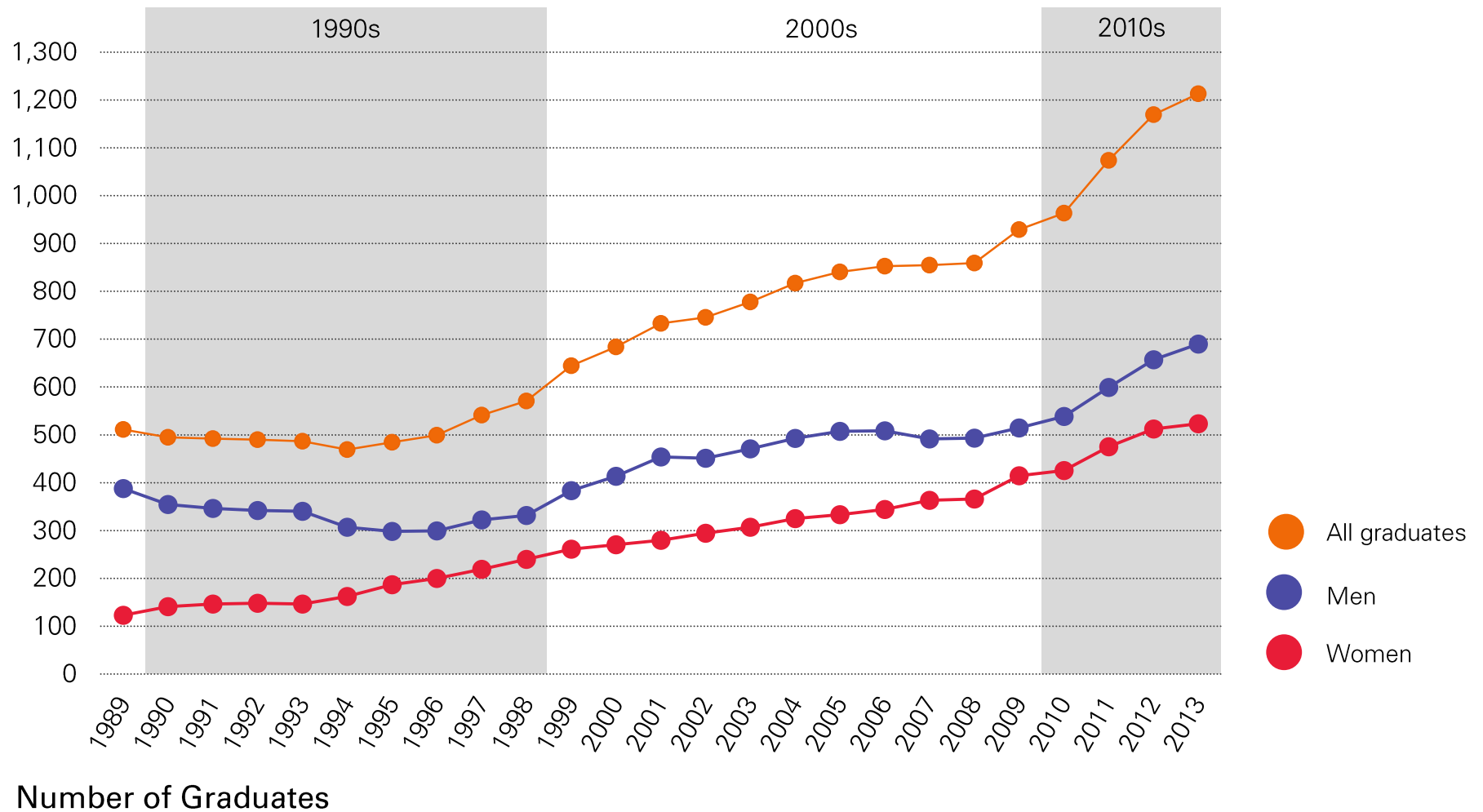
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Women play important roles in Australian architecture, and their numbers have increased significantly over time.

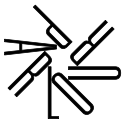
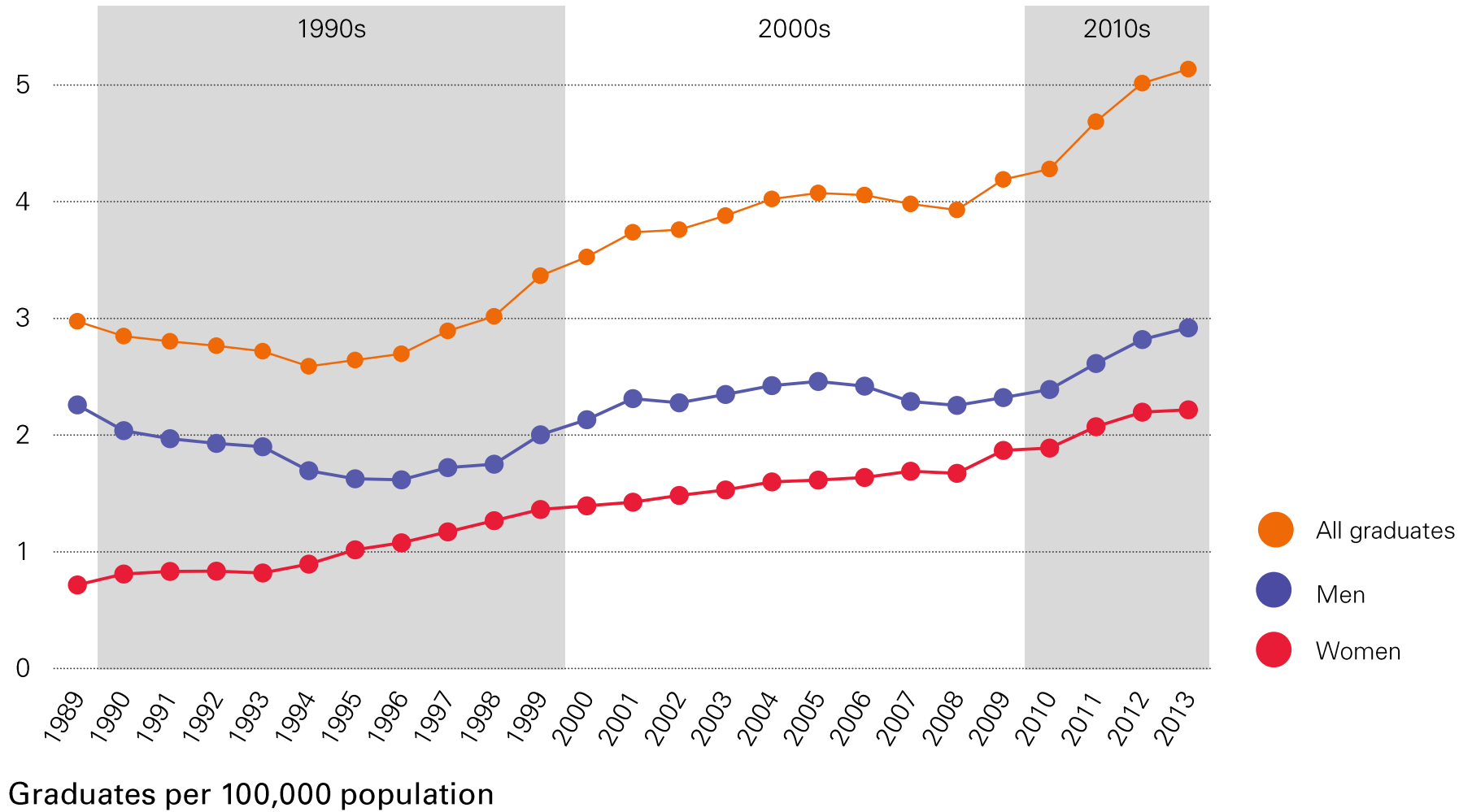


The number of women graduates has grown five-fold since the late 1980s.

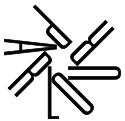
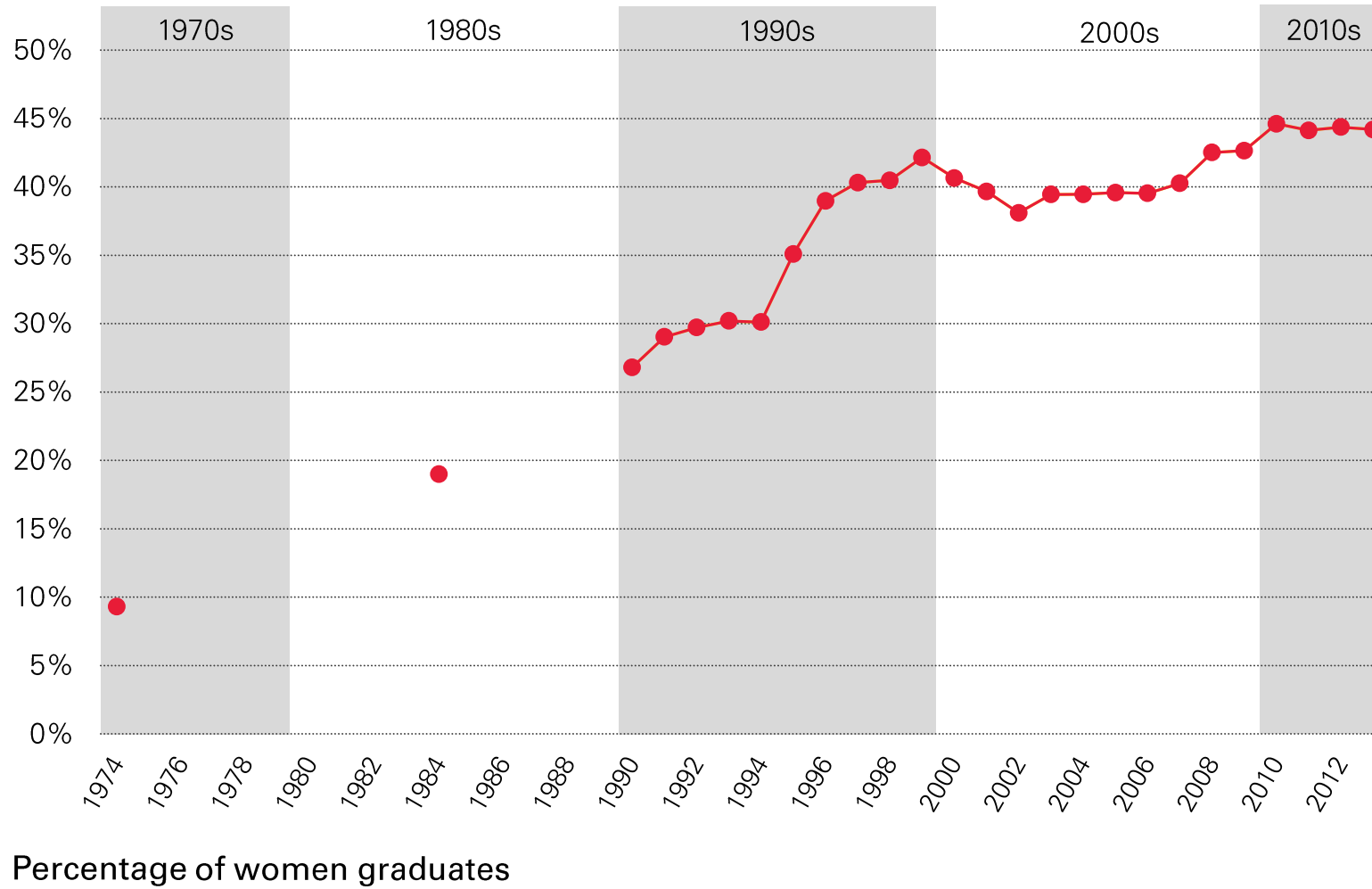


Sources: Australian Institute of Architects, *Architecture Schools of Australasia*, 1988–2015.

Relative to population, women graduates have steadily grown, while the number of men has fluctuated.

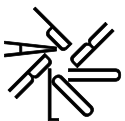
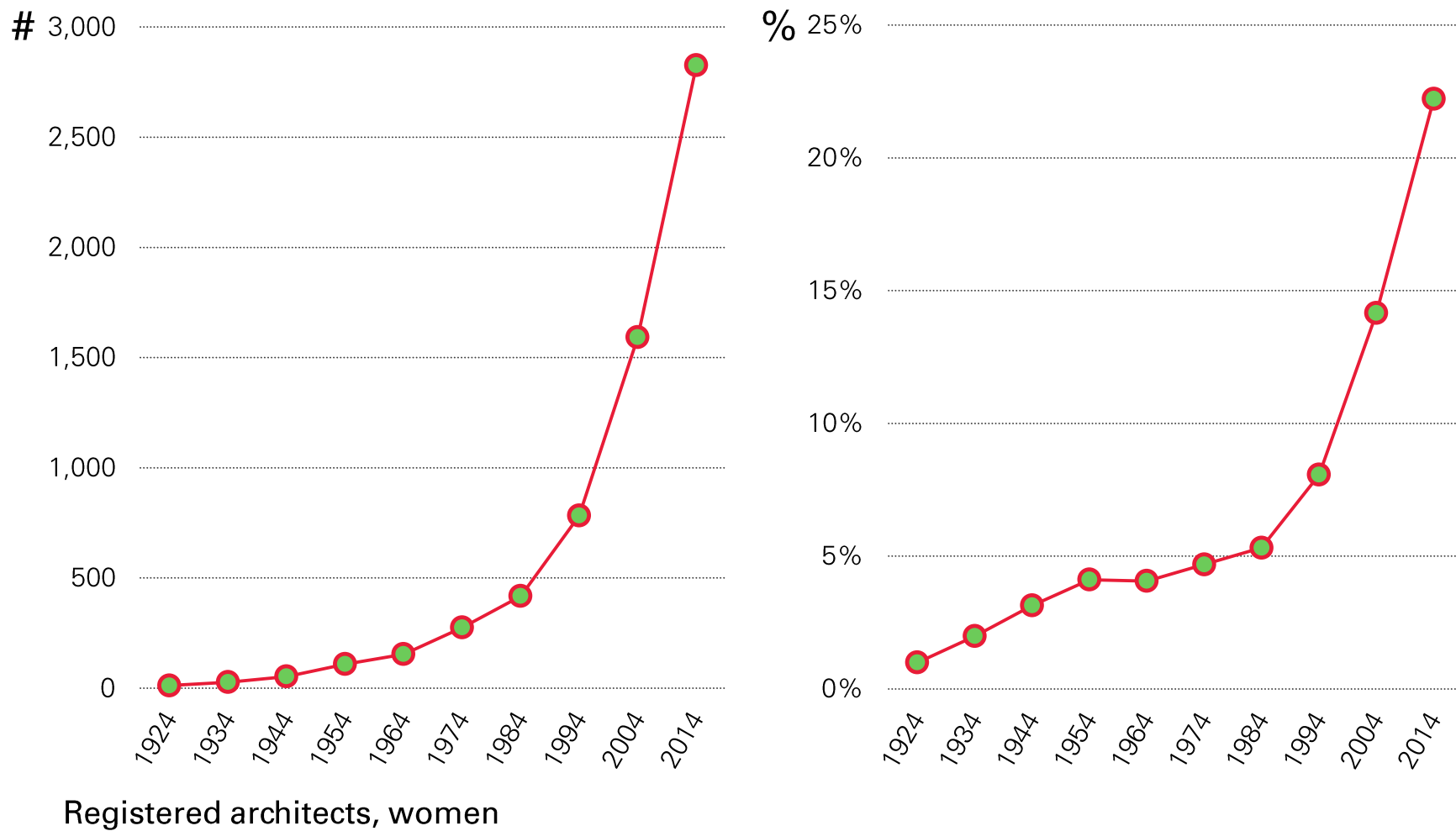


The proportion of women graduates has been over 40% since the mid-1990s.



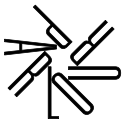
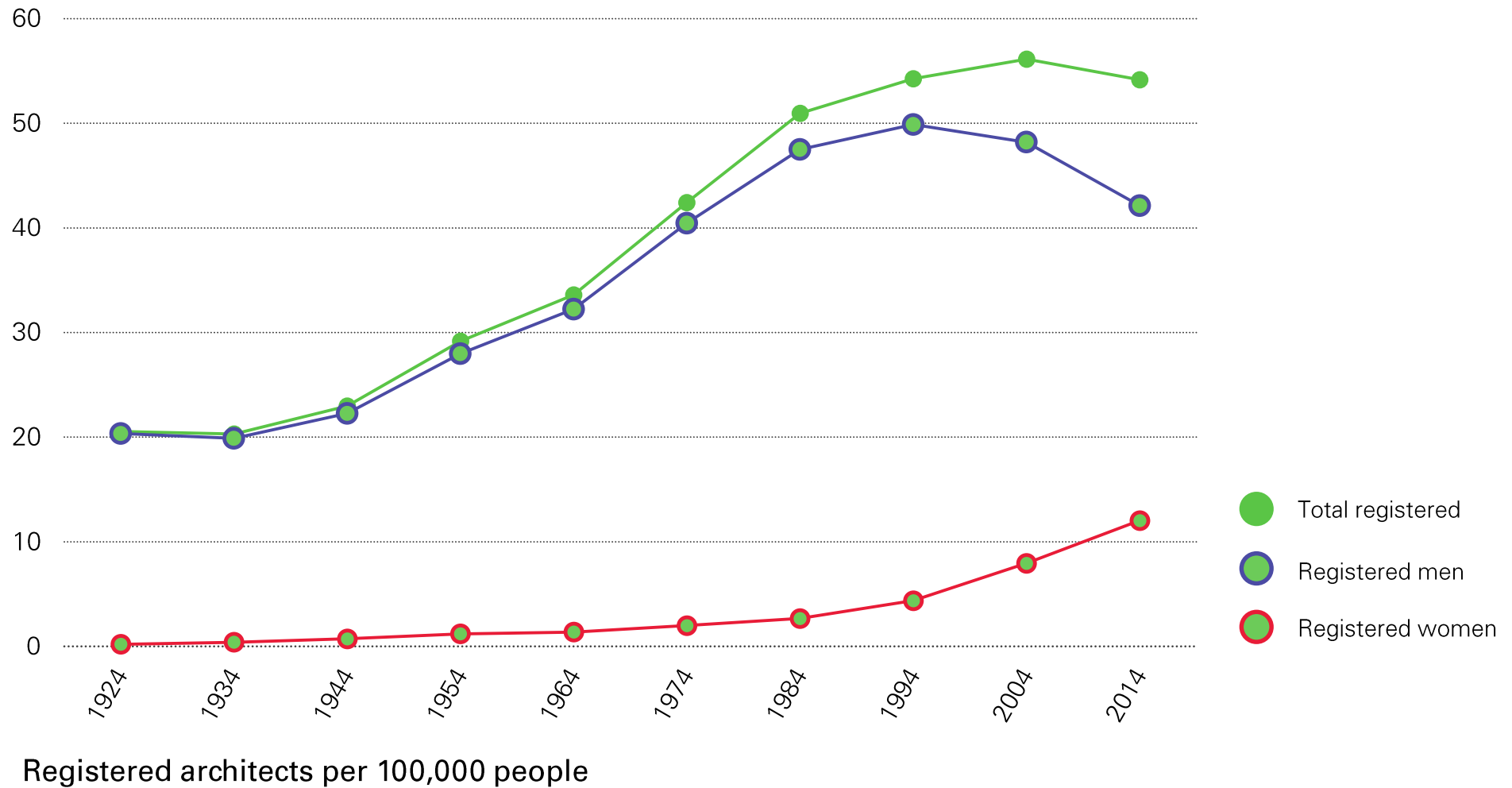
Sources: *Architecture Schools of Australasia*, 1988–2015; 1974 and 1984 figures from Bronwyn Hanna, "Three Feminist Analyses of the Built Environment," *Architectural Theory Review* 1, no. 1 (1996): 22

The number of women who are registered architects has increased rapidly over the last two decades.



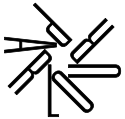
Sources: Julie Willis, *A Statistical Survey of Registered Women Architects in Australia* (Adelaide: University of South Australia, 1997) 7; Paula Whitman, *Going Places: The Career Progression of Women in the Architectural Profession* (Brisbane: Queensland University of Technology, 2005); individual registration boards

Relative to population, the number of registered women architects has grown, while the number of registered men has declined.



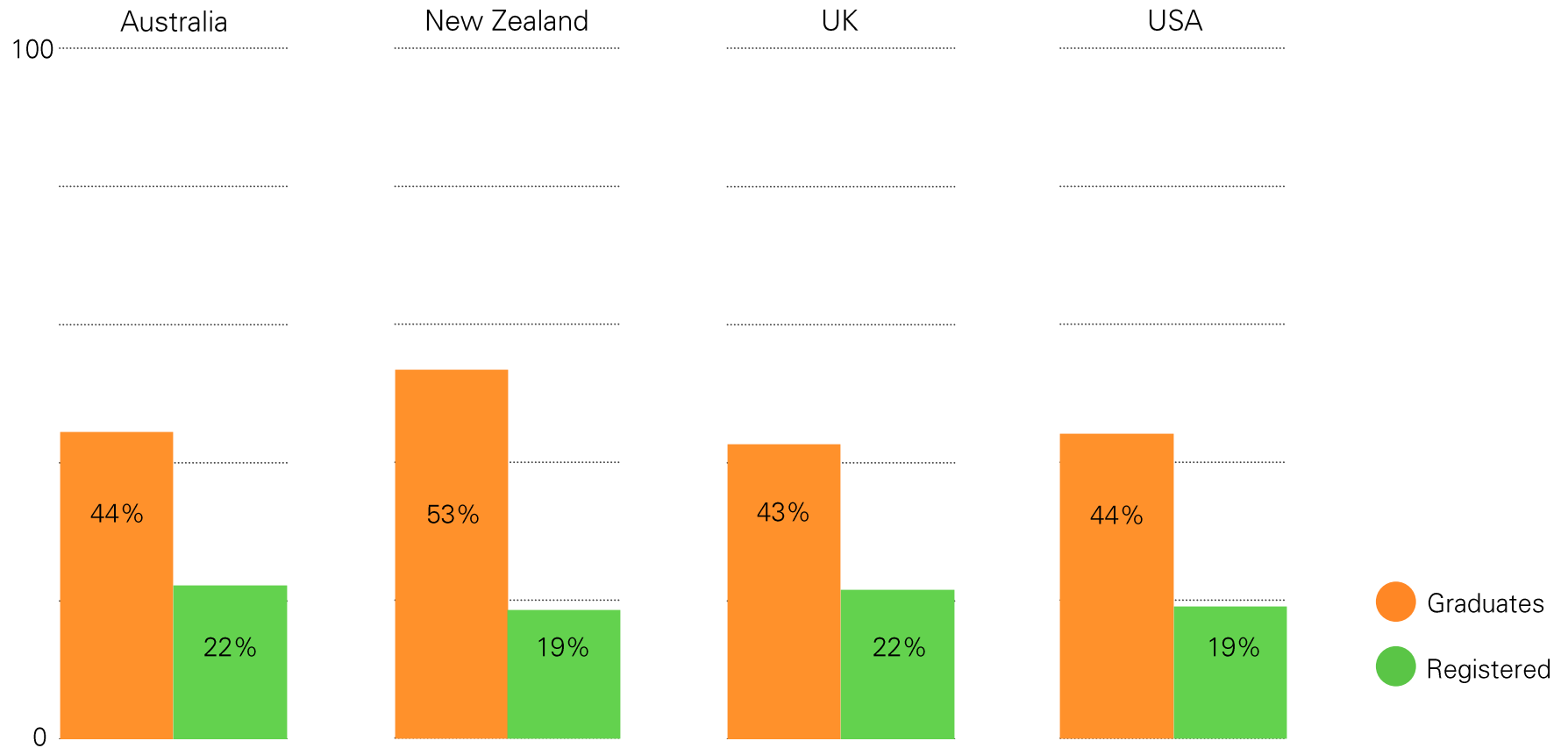
Sources: Willis, *A Statistical Survey of Registered Women Architects in Australia*; Whitman, *Going Places*; individual registration boards; ABS population figures.

But...

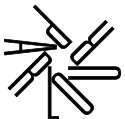




There is a large gap between women as graduates and as registered architects, a situation that Australia shares with other countries.



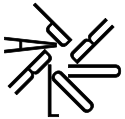
Proportion of women: Graduates compared with registered architects



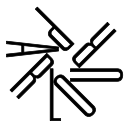
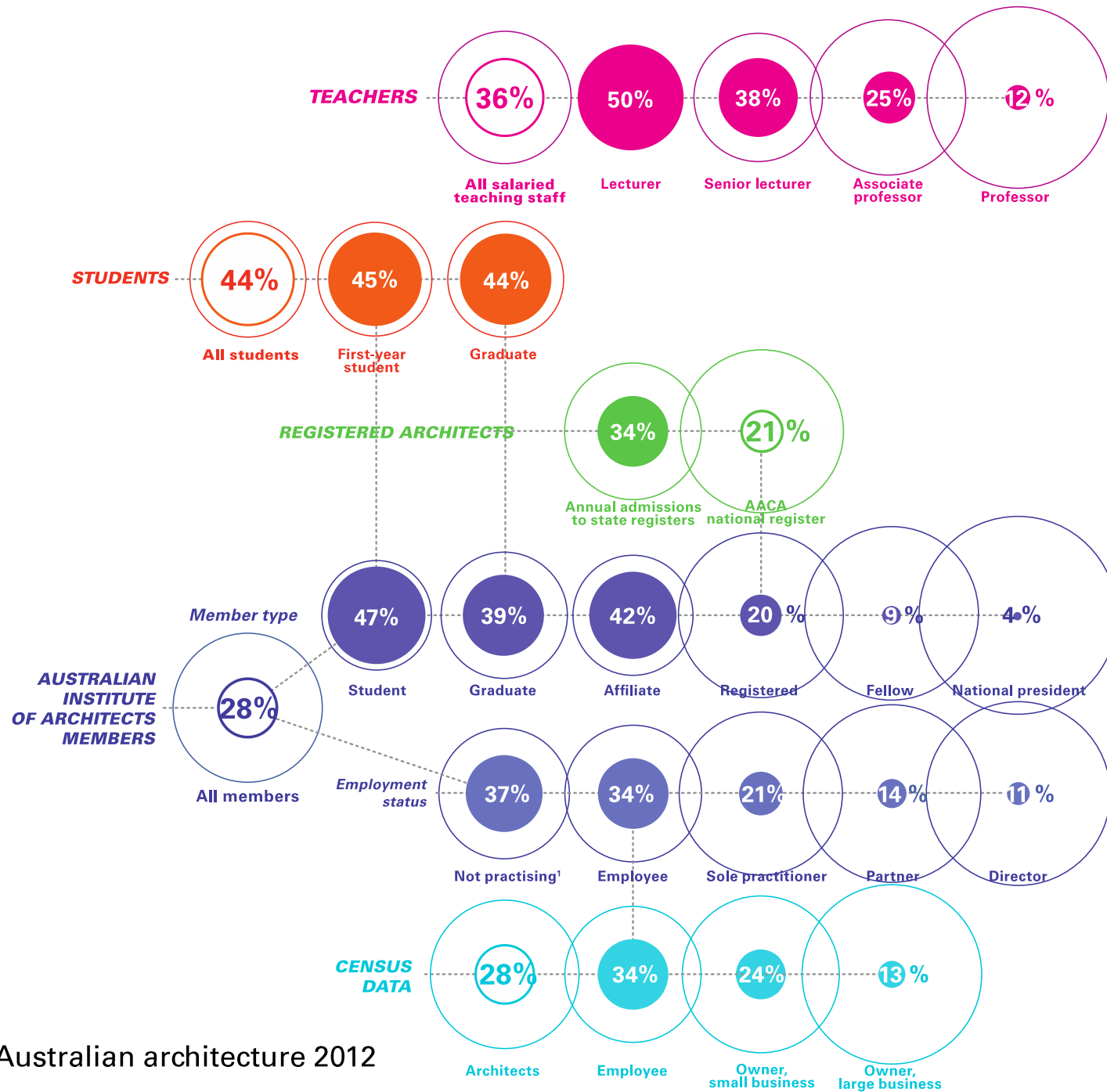
Sources: *Architecture Schools of Australasia*, 2015; individual registration boards, Australia; New Zealand Registered Architects Board, "Annual Reports" <https://www.nzrab.nz/c/Key-Documents>; *RIBA Education Statistics 2013-2014*, <https://www.architecture.com/Files/RIBAProfessionalServices/Education/2015/EducationStatistics2013-2014.pdf>; UK Architects Registration Board "Annual Report, 2015." <http://www.arb.org.uk/annual-report>; Despina Stratigakos, *Where are the Women Architects?* Princeton University Press, 2016.

But...

Women still cluster in the junior ranks of the profession, despite having comprised nearly half of all architecture graduates since the mid-1990s.



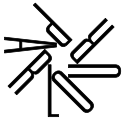
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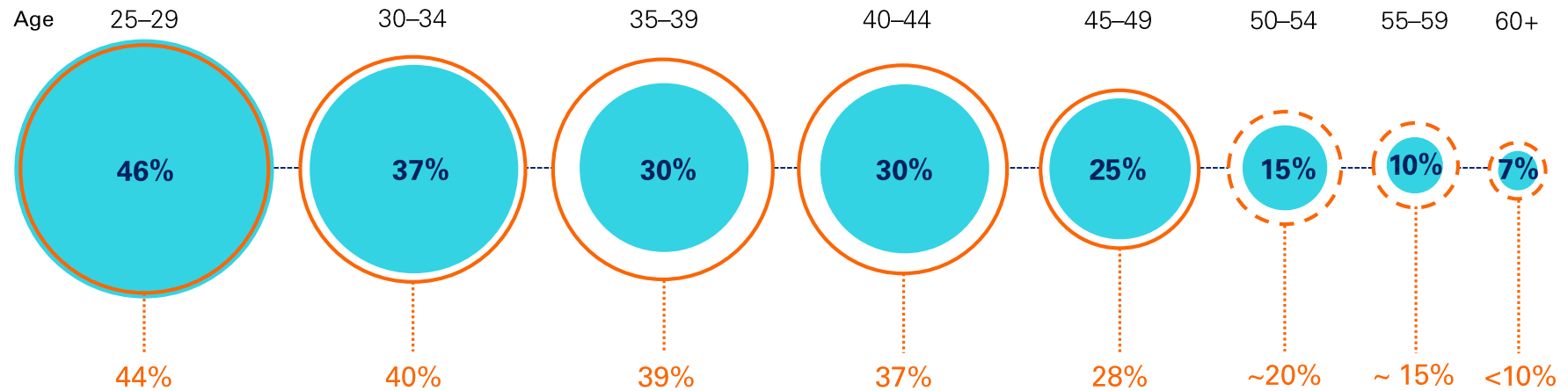
## Women in Australian architecture 2012

But...

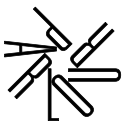
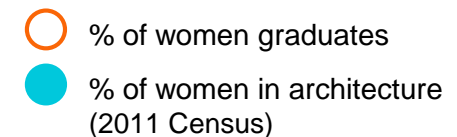
Women leave architecture at  
higher rates than men.



The proportion of women in architecture identified in the Census is **less** than their graduation rates in every age group, except the youngest.

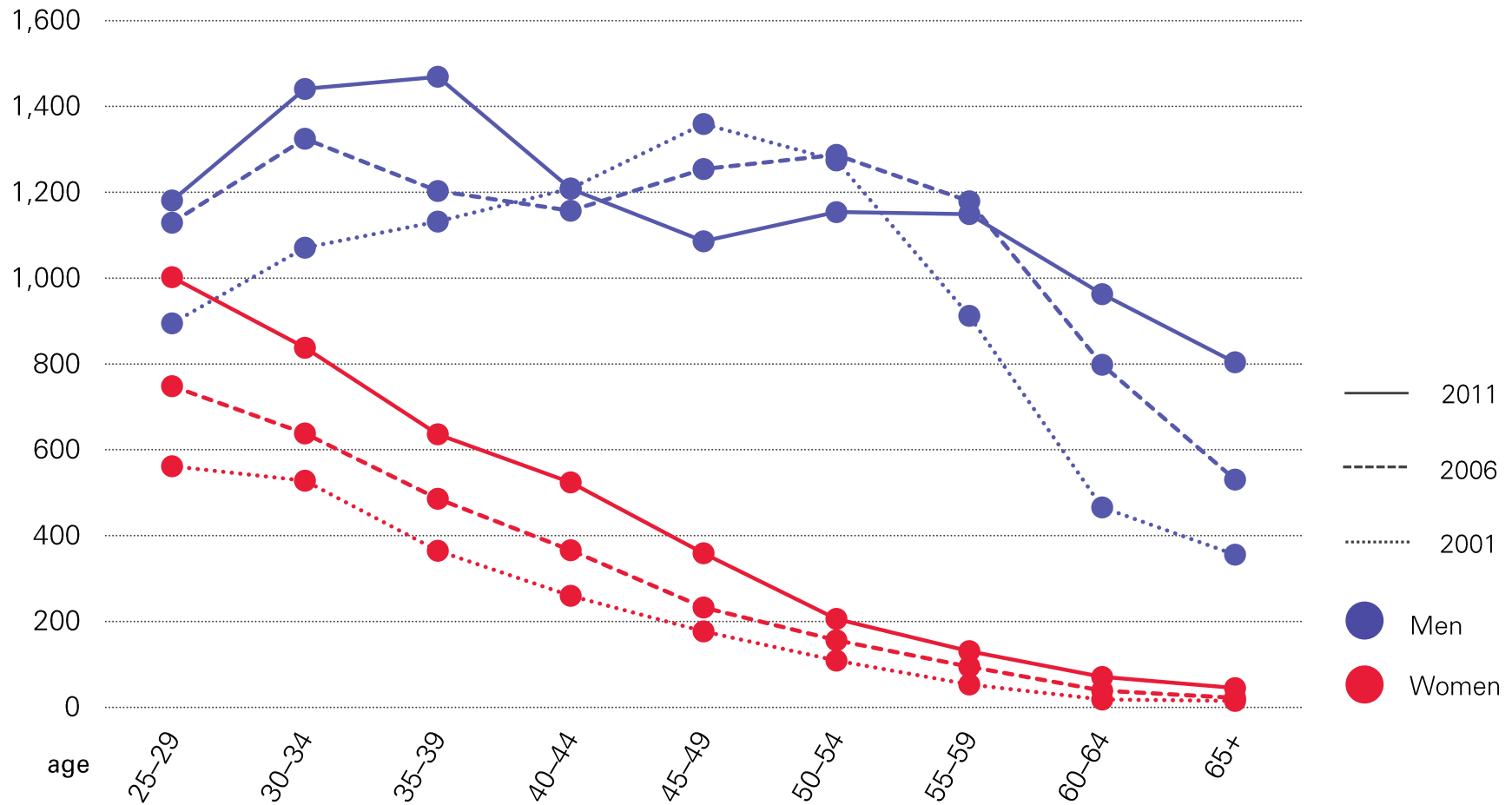


Women architects by age group compared to graduation

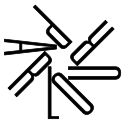


Source: ABS 2011 Census for architects. *Architecture Schools of Australasia*, 1988-2013.

The number of women in architecture peaks in the 25–29 age group and then declines.



Architects by age group & gender, 2011, 2006, 2001 Censuses

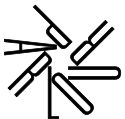


Source: ABS 2011 Census for architects

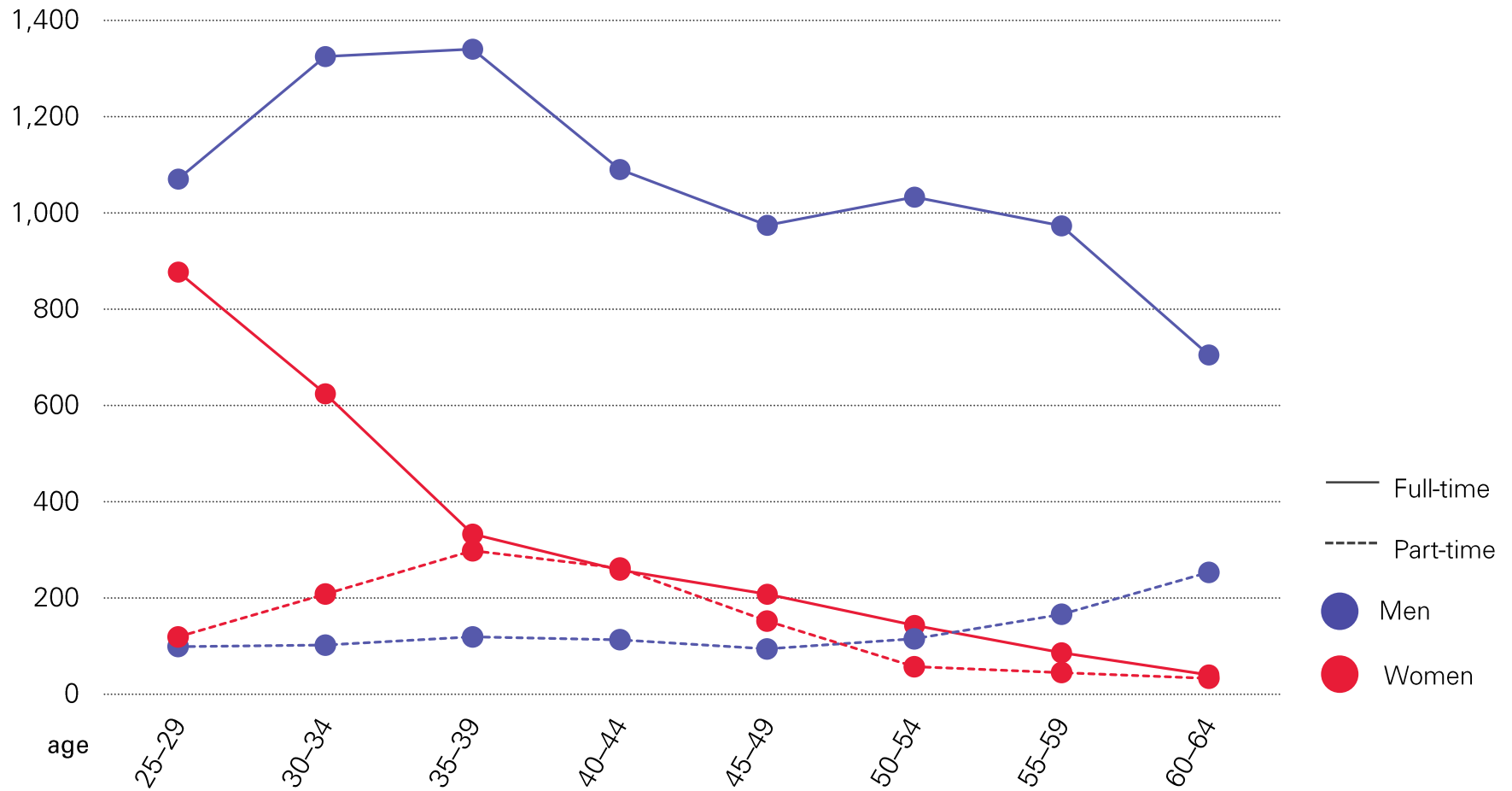
The reasons for this are complex and entwined. They include:

- relatively low pay rates across the industry
- a paucity of meaningful part-time and flexible work options
- entrenched long-hours cultures in many practices

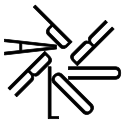
These impact more severely on women than men resulting in skewed employment patterns.



A higher proportion of women architects work part-time than men.



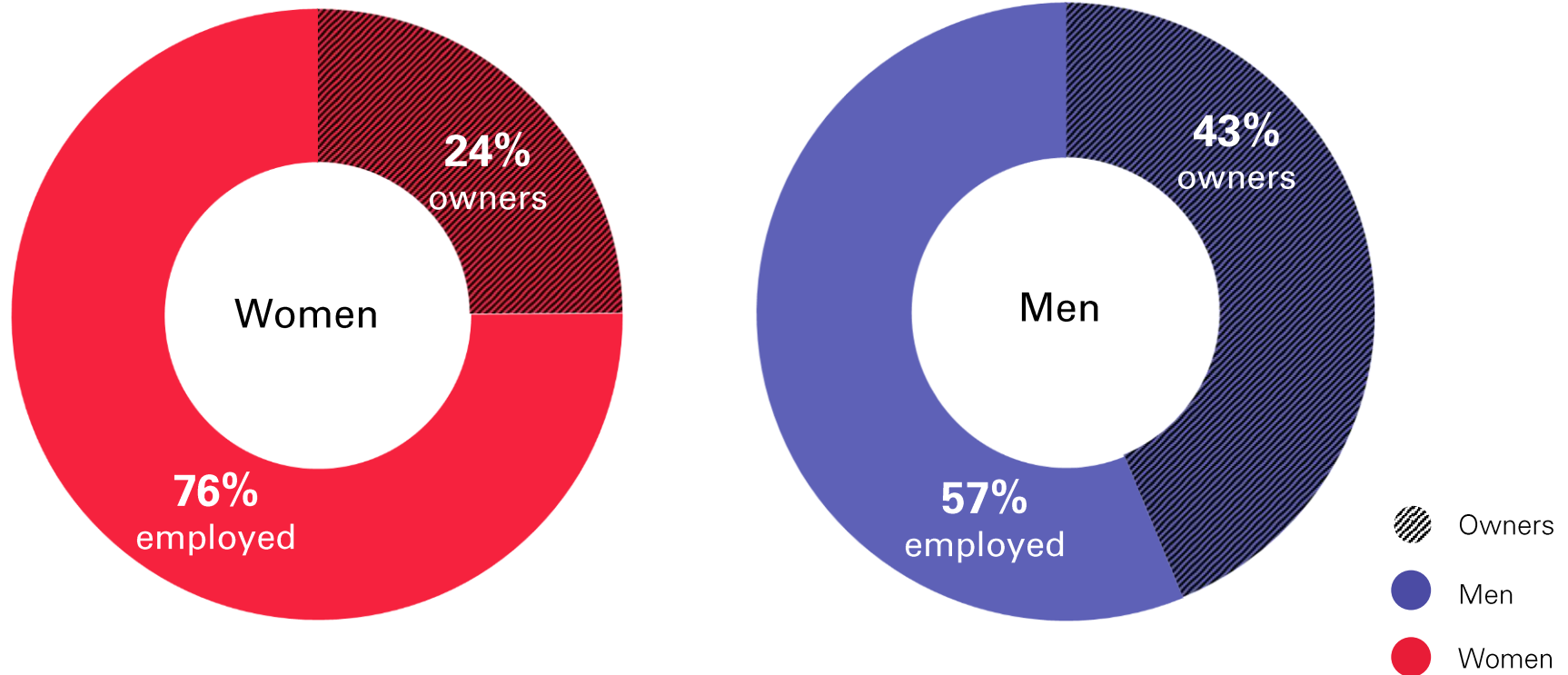
Full-time vs part-time architects, by age group and gender



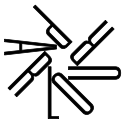
Source: ABS 2011 Census for architects.



Women are more likely to be employees than employers.

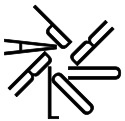
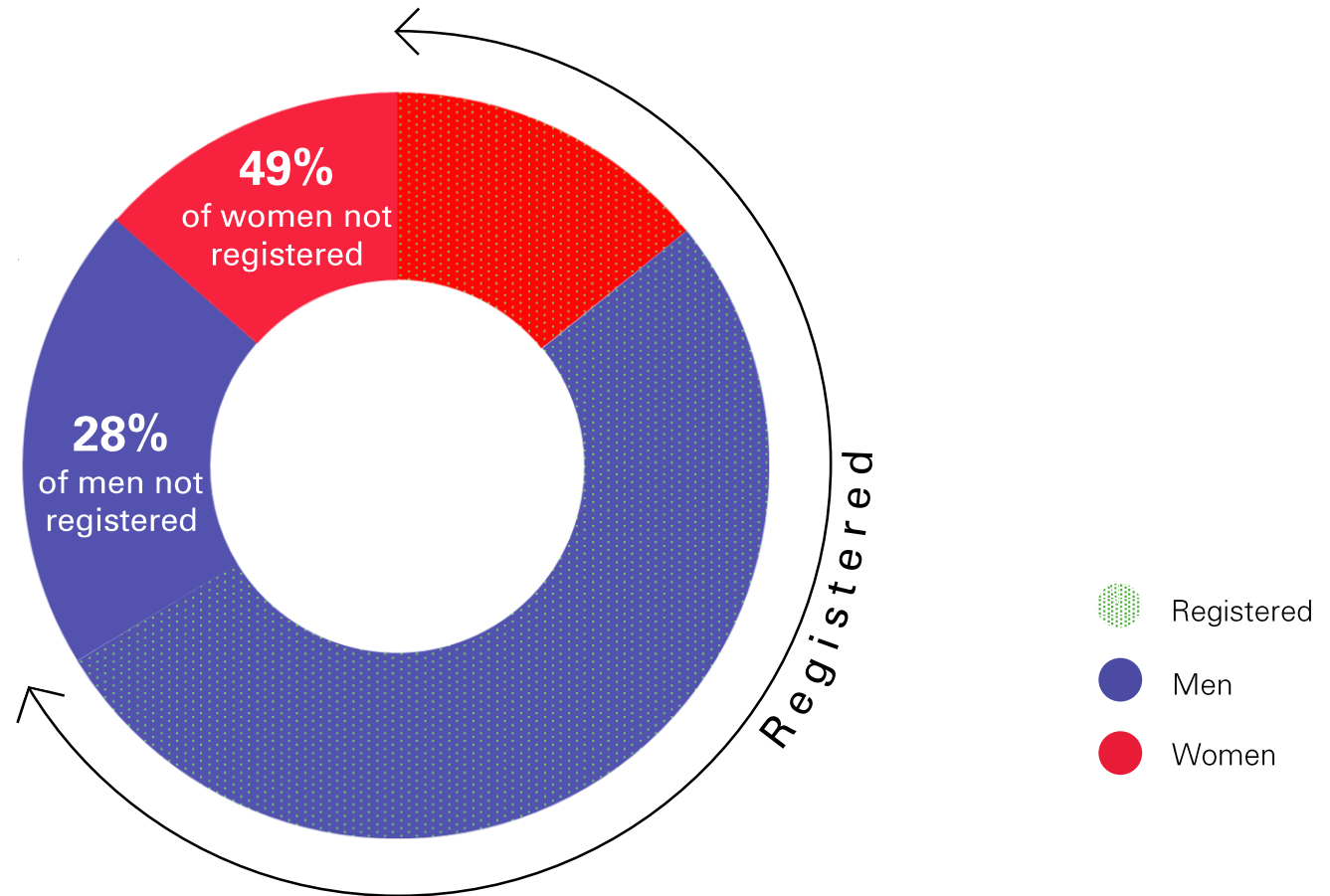


Employment – employee /owner

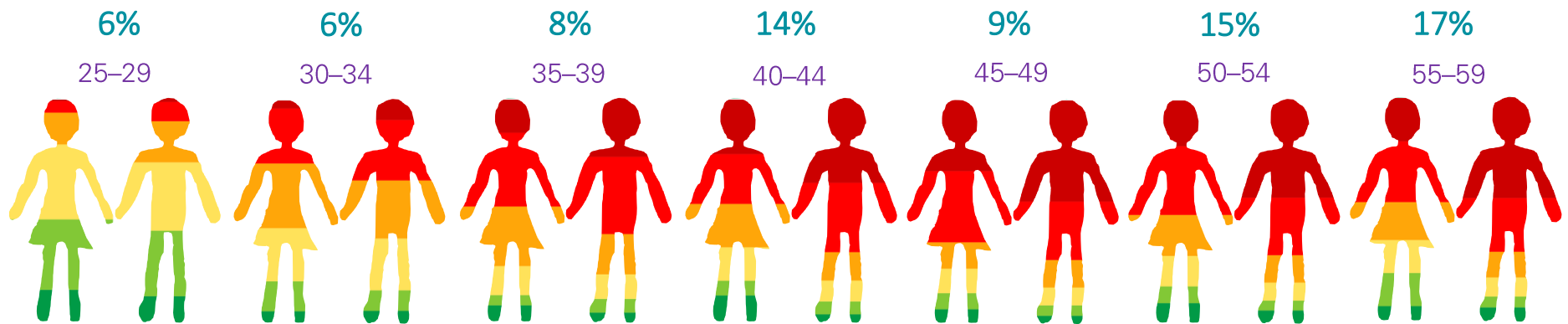


Source: ABS 2011 Census for architects. AACA 2012 combined register

Around one-third of the architectural workforce is not registered.  
Nearly twice as many women are working in the profession as are registered architects.



The gender pay gap begins just after graduation and gets larger. In the chart below, for every age group, more of the men's bodies are red (higher pay) while the women's legs are greener longer (lower pay).



Gender pay gap: Distribution of earnings per week by age group and gender – Full-time workers

Size of pay gap

Age group



more than \$104,000



\$65,000–\$77,999



\$41,600–\$51,999



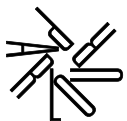
\$78,000–\$103,999



\$52,000–\$64,999

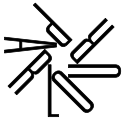


less than \$41,600

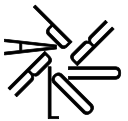
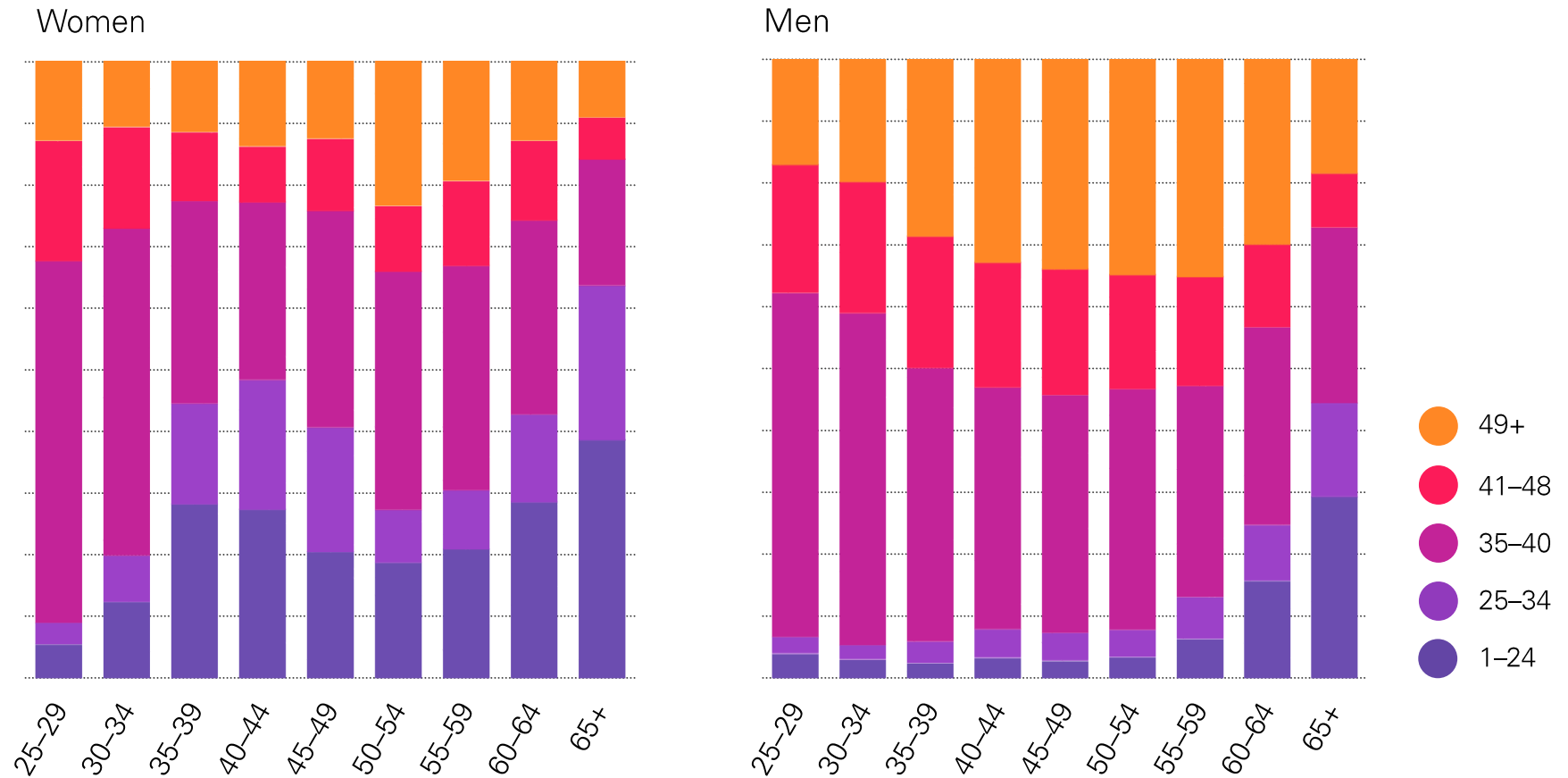


These factors also impact men.

In particular, men bear  
the brunt of architecture's  
long-hours culture.



A large proportion of men work long hours for most of their careers.

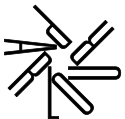


Source: ABS 2011 Census for architects

This culture forces many to leave architecture, particularly women.

Some move into other, related areas, where they do great work and find new opportunity.

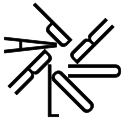
But many women feel forced out, and are disillusioned and dispirited by the structural factors that leave them unable to fulfil their potential in architecture.



These are issues for the profession as a whole.

We can ill-afford to lose highly educated, talented and experienced architects.

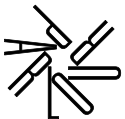
Architecture must find new modes of work that will ensure a robust, viable and sustainable future for the profession.



## Data sources

- Annual handbook *Architecture Schools of Australasia*, 1988–2015  
(Barton, ACT: Australian Institute of Architects National Office)
- Architecture schools—direct requests
- Registration boards—direct requests, Annual Reports
- Australian Institute of Architects, membership data
- Australian Bureau of Statistics Census of Population and Housing  
(occupation code Architect, ANZSCO 232111)
- 2012 Architects Accreditation Council of Australia—combined register

Data initially collected by Gill Matthewson and Kirsty Volz as part of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project LP100200107 Equity and Diversity in the Australian Architecture Profession: Women, Work, and Leadership, 2010–2014.



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