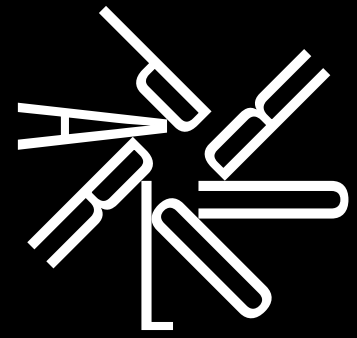


prepared by  
**Gill Matthewson,  
Justine Clark & Anwyn Hocking**



: gender  
equity,  
architecture.

# Parlour 2021 Census Wrap: Gender & diversity in Australian Architecture

The Census is an immensely valuable source of information about the architectural workforce. It records changes over time and reveals shifting patterns of participation.

The 2021 analysis shows that, although substantial progress has been made, there is still continuing inequity in the profession.

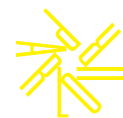
We need action on equity in every nook and cranny of the profession, individually and collectively.

The Parlour Census reports are a means to review the profession's current state and to develop strategies for activation. We trust you will use this knowledge in your own context as we work together to increase equity for all.

This document offers an overview of key data.  
For further detail and analysis please refer to the full *Parlour Census Report 2001–2021: Gender & diversity in Australian architecture*.

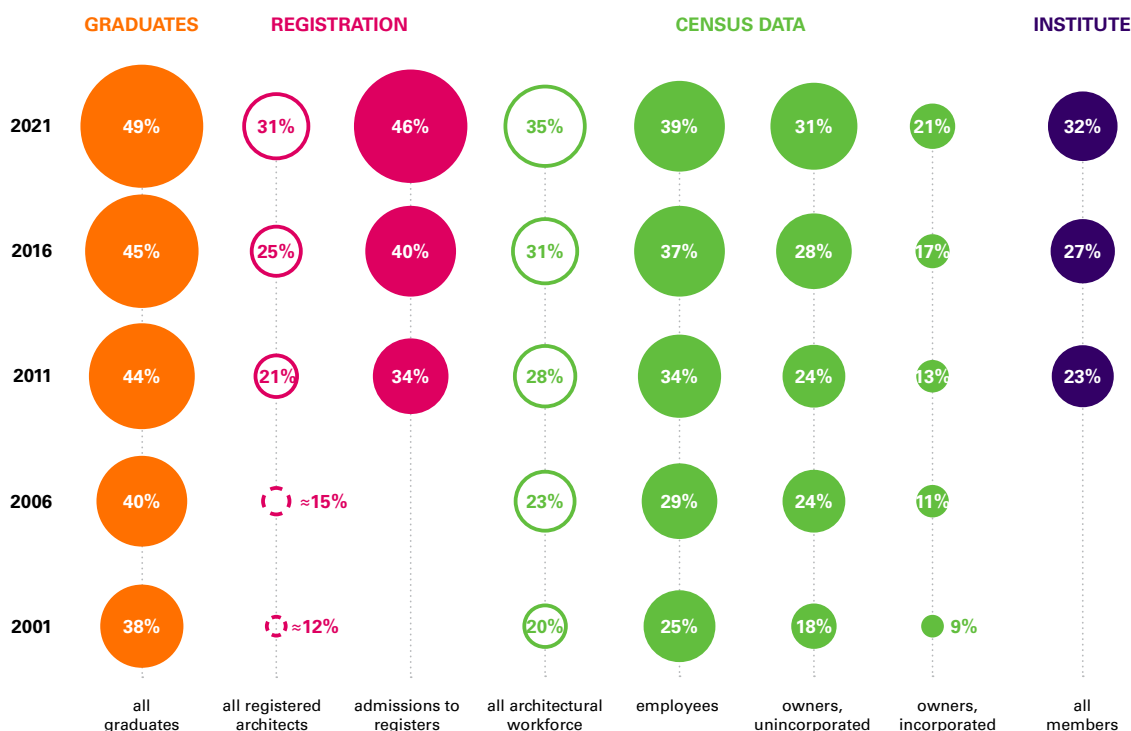
Note: the data available from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) treats gender as a binary. As a consequence this analysis refers to women and men only. We look forward to the ABS remedying the omission of gender-diverse in the next Census.

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## The numbers

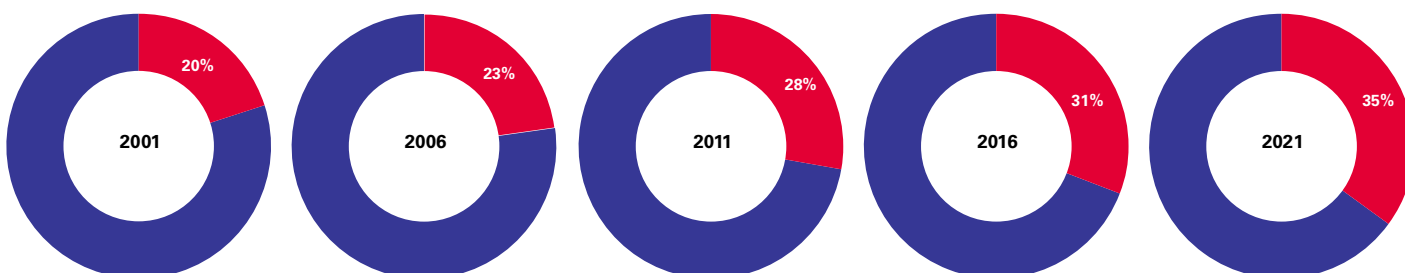
*Women continue to steadily increase their share across most of the available metrics within architecture. This growth is not unexpected. Since the mid-1990s, women have been over 40% of all architectural graduates and have entered the profession in significant numbers.*

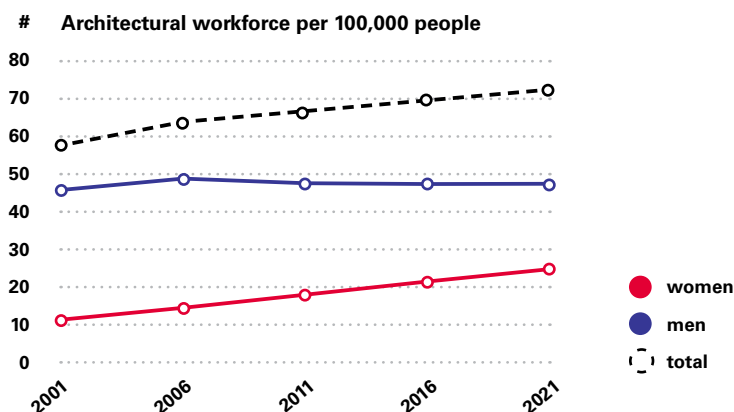


The size of the architectural workforce increased by 71% between 2001 and 2021 – from 11,283 to 19,323. Over the same period, the proportion of women within the workforce has increased from 20% to 35%. Despite this pleasing growth, women are not joining and staying at levels that are proportionate to graduation rates.

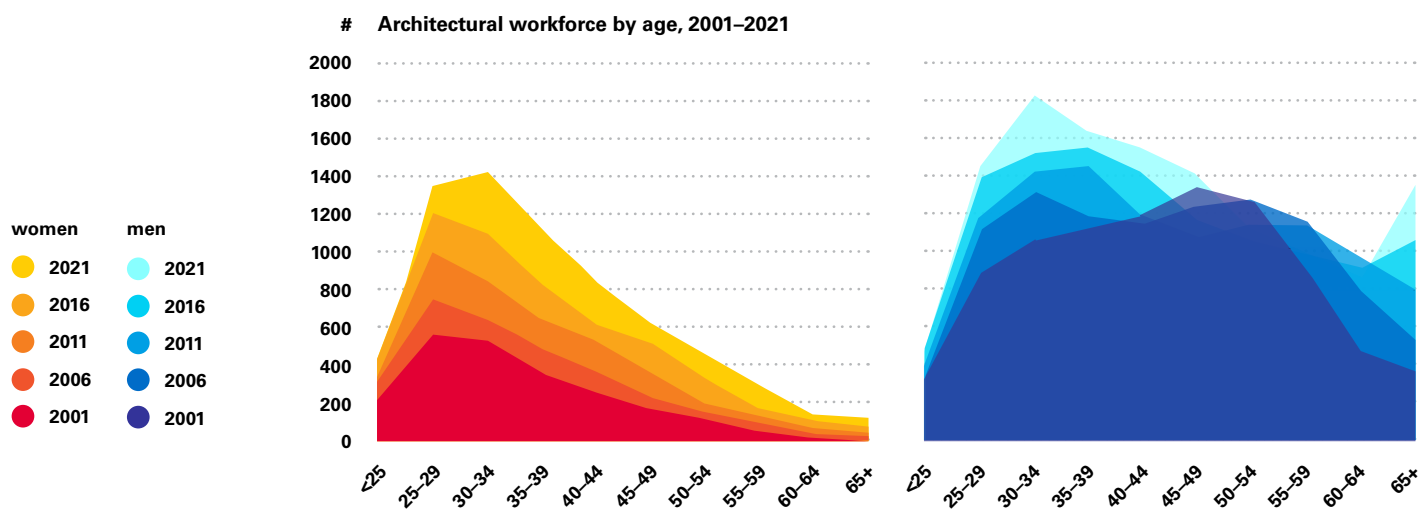
● women  
● men

### Women in the architectural workforce, 2001–2021





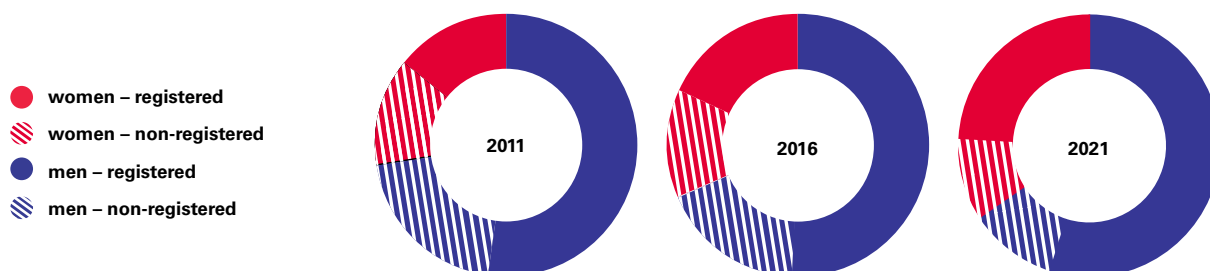
Relative to the Australian population, overall growth has been slower, and there is a strong gender difference. The number of women in the architectural workforce per 100,000 people increases consistently, while the number of men holds steady relative to population.



In 2021, for the first time, women aged 30–34 represent the largest age group of women in the architectural workforce. This growth is paired with another significant shift – women over 40 are no longer leaving at higher rates than men.

The last decade has seen substantial jumps in the number and proportions of women attaining registration – in 2021 approximately 71% of women in the overall workforce were registered architects, a huge increase from 51% in 2011.

#### Registered architects, 2011–2021

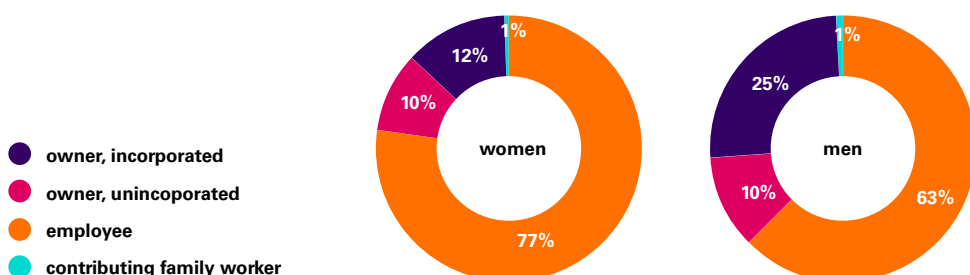




## Employment & ownership

An increasing proportion of the architectural workforce is employees – from 57% in 2001 to 68% in 2021. Women are an increasing number and proportion of owners, but are still underrepresented, particularly in larger businesses.

Employment and ownership, 2021



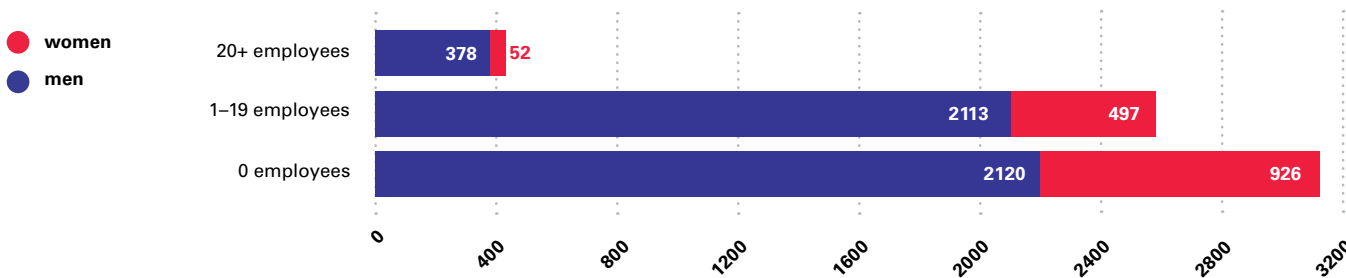
Women are only 24% of all owners (1,475 women out of a total of 6,086 people), despite a marked growth in women owning incorporated businesses.



By age, women lag behind men in taking up ownership.

Smaller practices are predominant – only 7% of all owners employ 20+ people. Just 12% of these owners of ‘larger’ practices are women. In contrast, women are 30% of all owners with no employees. This means that only 52 women counted in the Census employ 20 or more people. These people are 4% of all women owners and a mere 0.9% of all owners.

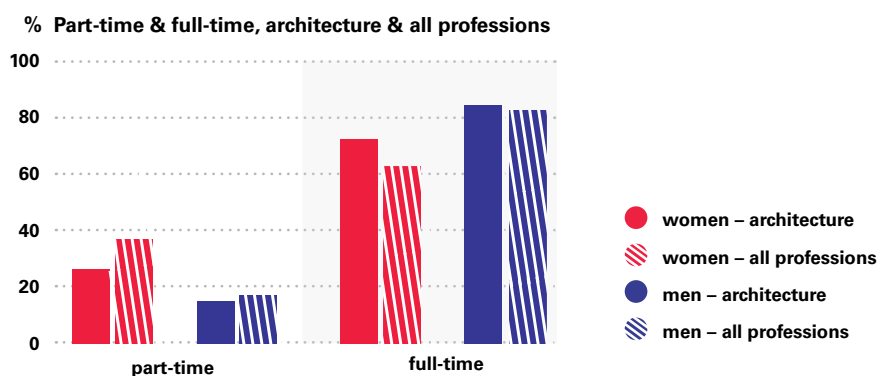
Ownership by number of employees, 2021



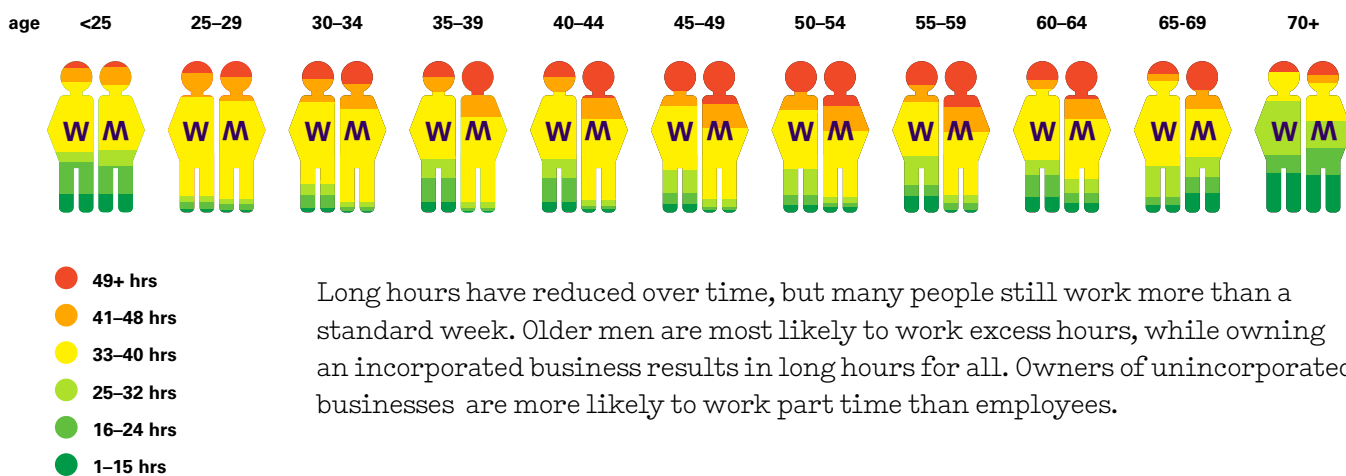


## Hours, long & short

*Hours worked are strongly differentiated by gender, with men working long hours and women more likely to work part time, particularly those aged 30 to 60.*

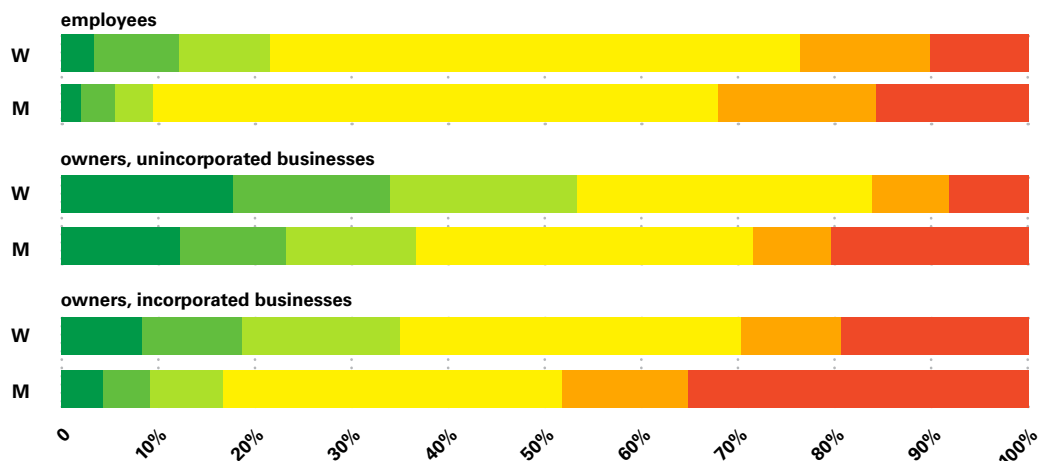


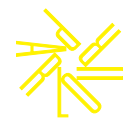
People in the architectural workforce are more likely to work full time compared to all professionals – especially women.



Long hours have reduced over time, but many people still work more than a standard week. Older men are most likely to work excess hours, while owning an incorporated business results in long hours for all. Owners of unincorporated businesses are more likely to work part time than employees.

**Hours worked per week by employment category & gender, 2021**



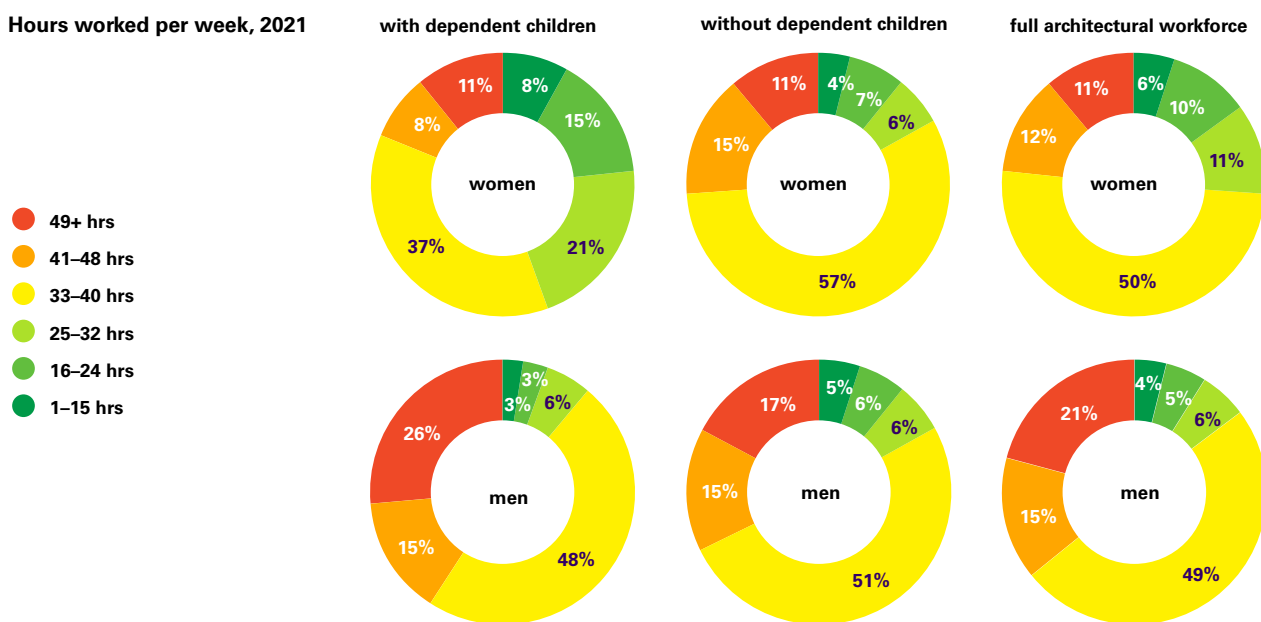


## Dependent children

*New analysis reveals the highly gendered impact of dependent children on workforce participation.*

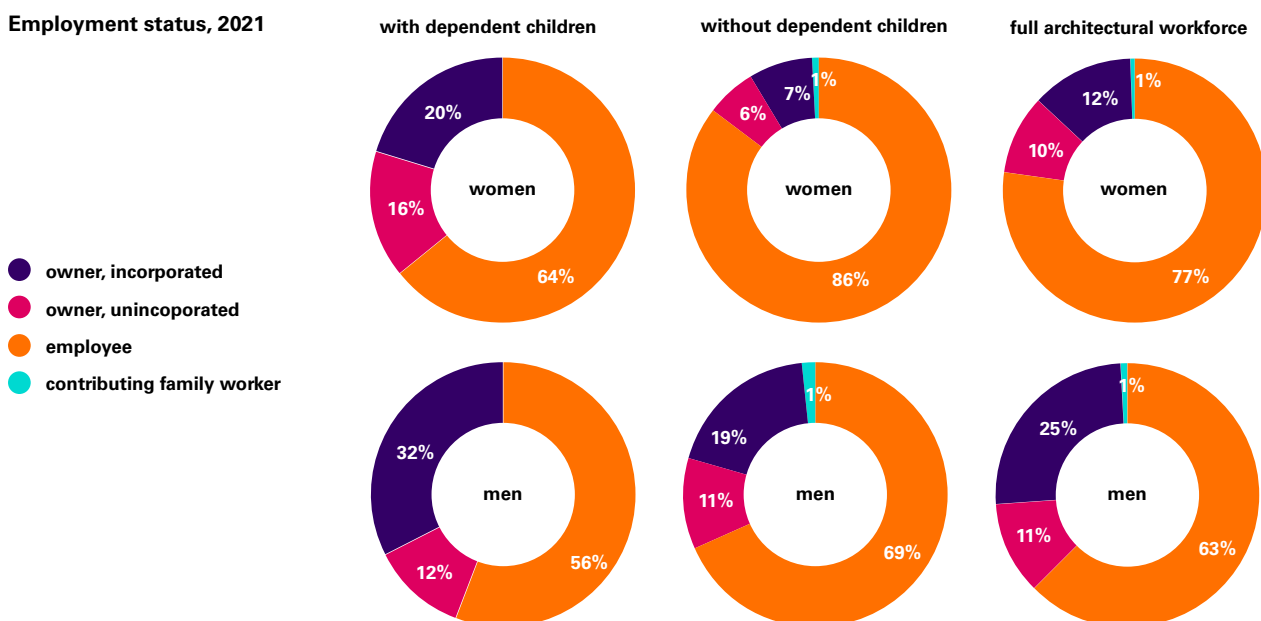
Close to half the women with dependent children work part time, compared to less than 12% of men with dependent children. Not only are these men more likely to be working full time, but 26% work more than 49 hours a week.

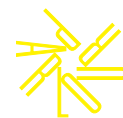
### Hours worked per week, 2021



Those with dependent children are also more likely to own their own business. This pattern holds for women and men, but is much more pronounced among women. Nonetheless, a higher proportion of women are employees than men.

### Employment status, 2021

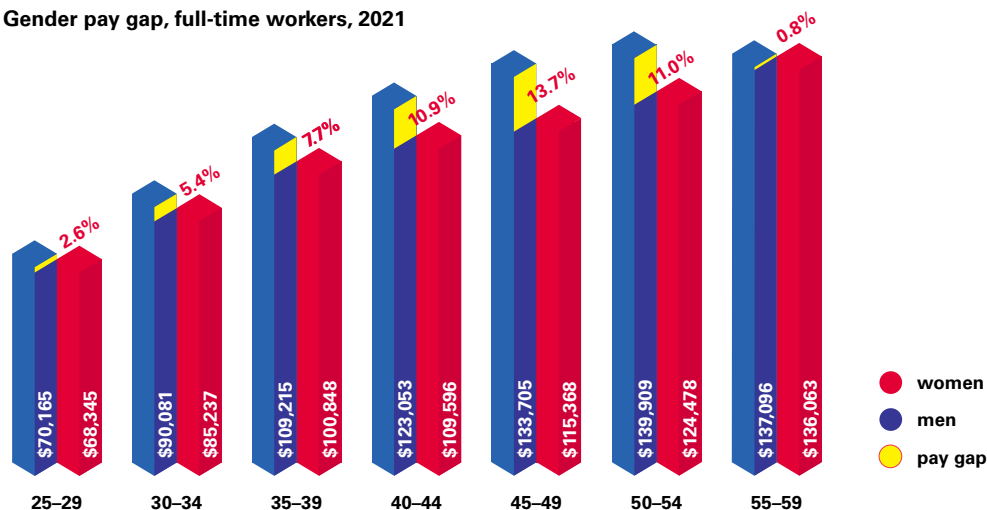




## Income & the gender pay gap

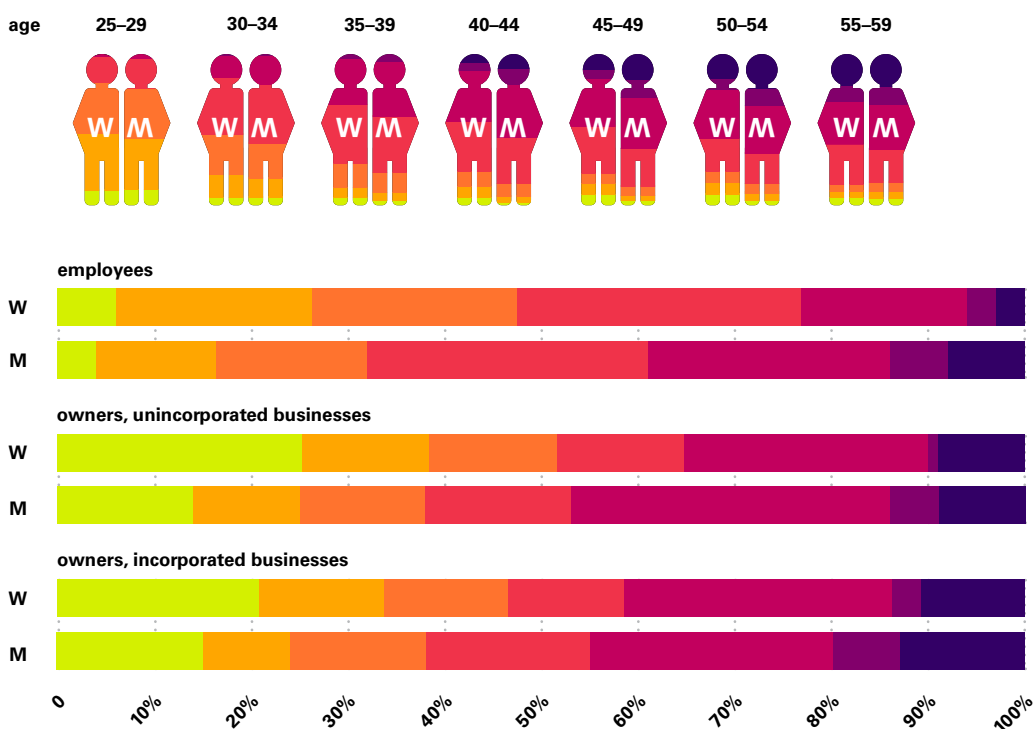
*Income is a key indicator of equity, and its absence. In 2021 the overall gender pay gap for full-time workers in architecture was 17.2%, a drop from 19% in 2016.*

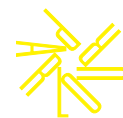
Gender pay gap, full-time workers, 2021



The gender pay gap has reduced for younger age groups in 2021 but is still dramatic in older age groups. Income distribution is also clearly gendered, while owners of businesses are over-represented at both the higher and lower ends of the income range.

Income distribution, full-time workers 2021



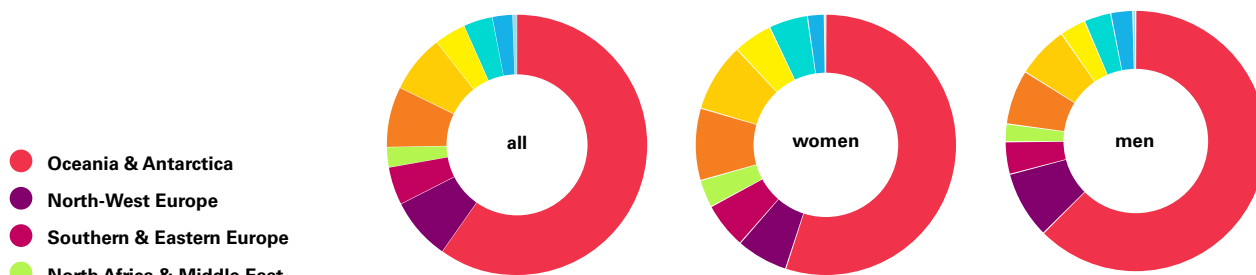


# Cultural diversity

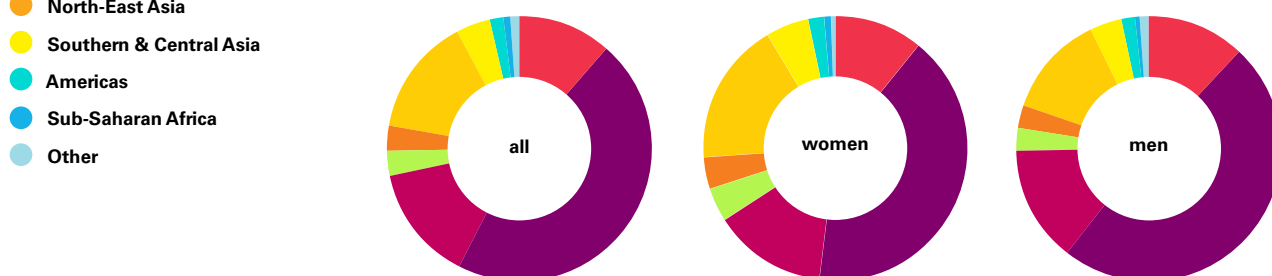
*The architectural workforce is increasingly diverse according to the key measures in the Census data.*

The number of Indigenous people counted in the architectural workforce has doubled from 31 to 65 since the 2016 Census. Proportionally, however, Indigenous representation remains very low.

Country of birth (region), 2021

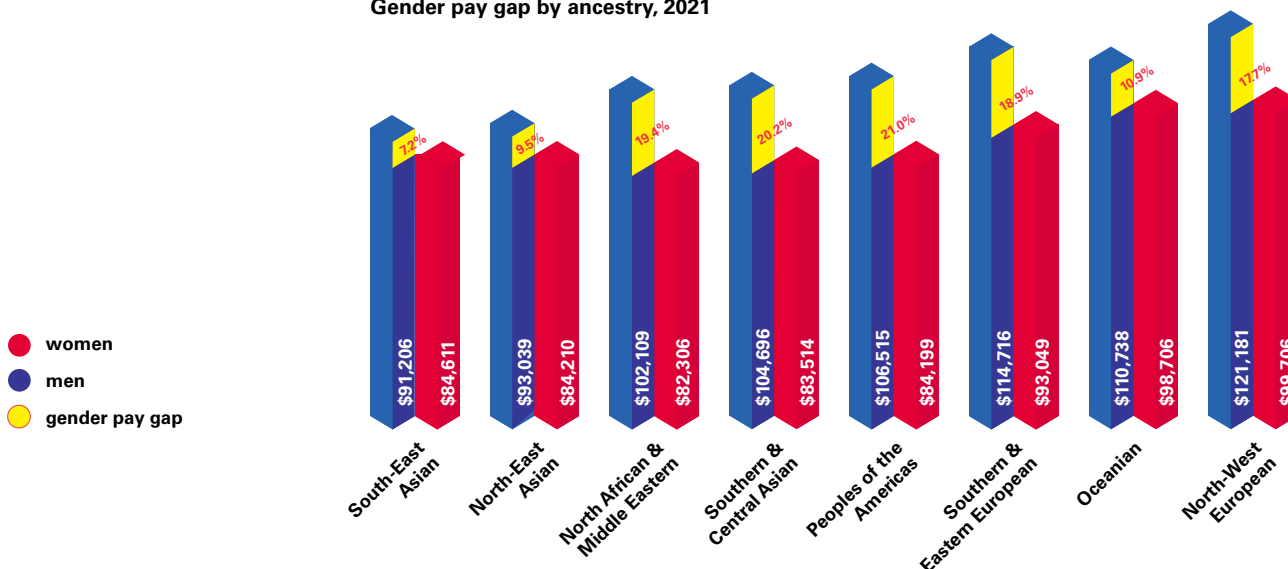


Ancestry, 2021

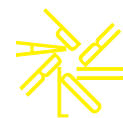


The cultural diversity visible in the Census basic measures is not reflected in the distribution of power and influence. This is particularly apparent in the pay gap. Men with a North-West European ancestry are most numerous and are paid the most, and there is a gender pay gap in every ancestry group.

Gender pay gap by ancestry, 2021



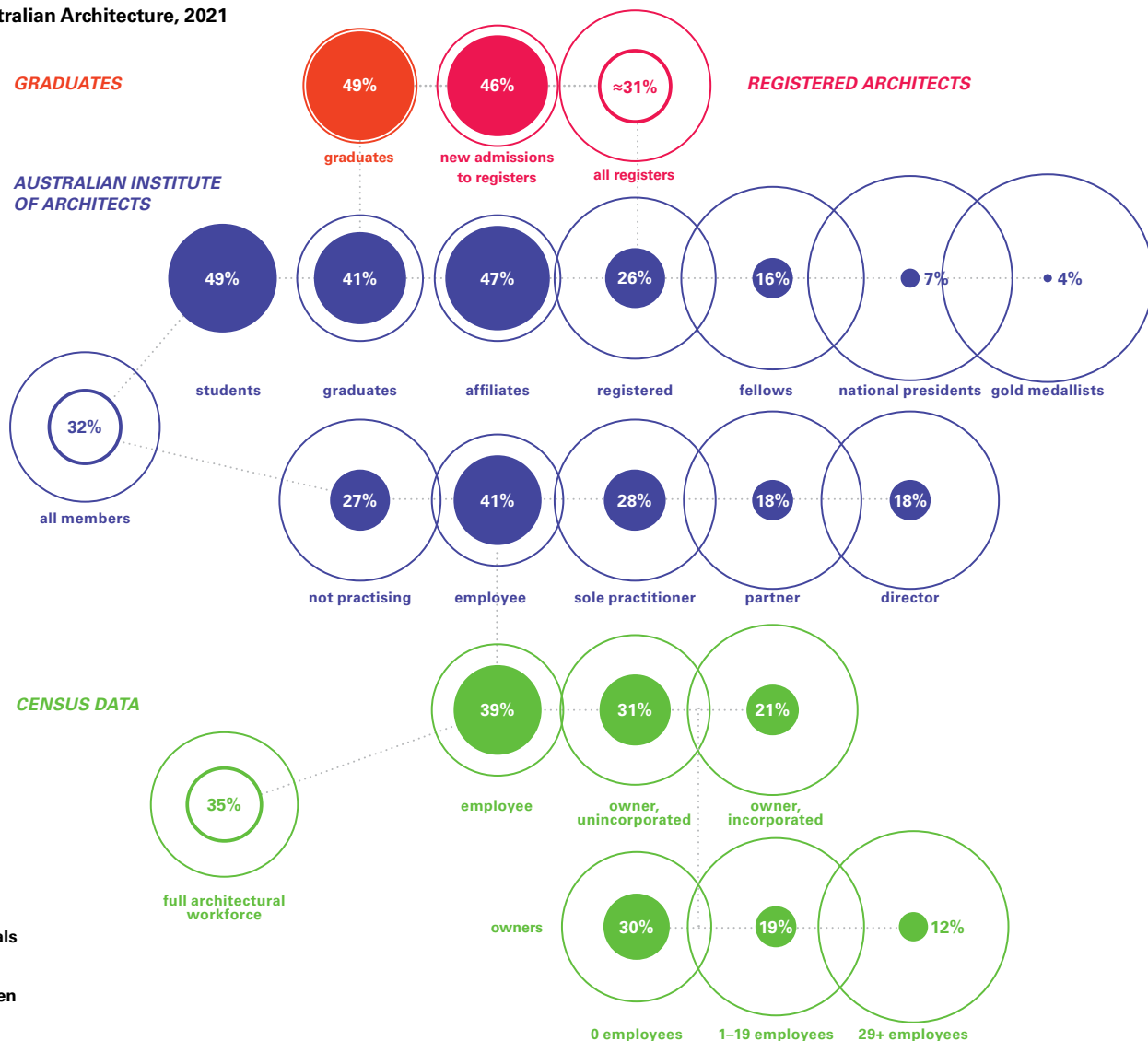




# Participation

The diagram below summarises the key recent data from various institutional sources. Women’s participation is increasing in every metric, but it is a much slower growth than the number of women graduates might suggest. At the levels of influence, women are increasingly visible, but still proportionally at lower levels than men.

## Women in Australian Architecture, 2021



For example, in the more than 60 years of the Australian Institute of Architects Gold Medal award, women have won just four times – two in partnership with their male spouse. All four winners have been this century, two in the last five years.

We need ongoing action at all levels of the profession. We need long-term and wide-ranging strategies to address the multiple and intersecting factors that work against women as a group. Tracking data is vital to monitoring the effectiveness of action. We encourage everyone to play a role in working for a more equitable profession.



# On Parlour

**Parlour: gender, equity architecture is a research-based advocacy organisation working for equity in architecture and the built environment. Our work is based in Australia and our material, resources and tools used across the world.**

**As activists and advocates we generate debate and discussion. As researchers and scholars we provide serious analysis and a firm evidence base for change. As active participants in Australian architecture we seek to open up opportunities and broaden definitions of what architectural activity might be.**

Instagram: [\\_parlour](#)

**Parlour provides a “space to speak”. It brings together research, informed opinion and resources on gender, equity and architecture. It provides places for active exchange and discussion, online and off. It seeks to expand the spaces and opportunities available to women and gender-diverse people while also revealing the many who already contribute in diverse ways.**

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