



AUSTRALIA

COUNTRY DATA SHEET¹



WHAT DO RESPONDENTS THINK ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING AUSTRALIA TODAY?

- ➔ ***“The economy”² is the most important issue facing the country for all respondents (62 percent) in Australia. The second most important issue is “global diseases and pandemics” (59 percent).***
- ➔ The prioritization of climate change is higher in Australia than elsewhere, as 29 percent of respondents in Australia consider *“climate change and the environment”* one of the most important issues.
- ➔ Five percent of respondents in Australia consider *“inequality between women and men”* as one of the three most important issues facing the country today. This rises slightly to six percent among female respondents and nine percent among female respondents aged 18 to 44.



WHAT DO RESPONDENTS IN AUSTRALIA THINK ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY?

- ➔ **Seventy percent of respondents in Australia say that gender equality is *“important”* to them personally.** This proportion is higher among female (76 percent) than male (62 percent) respondents. Only eight percent of respondents in Australia say that gender equality is *“unimportant”* to them.
- ➔ Fifty-nine percent of respondents in Australia think that gender equality is *“better”* in the country now than it was 25 years ago. Twenty-six percent think gender equality is *“more or less the same,”* and ten percent think it is *“worse.”*
- ➔ **Still, 53 percent of respondents in Australia, and 60 percent of female respondents, think the government *“should do more”* to promote gender equality.** Twenty-four percent want the government to do *“a lot more”* and 29 percent want *“a bit more”* government action.
- ➔ **To promote gender equality, 42 percent of respondents in Australia want their government to *“reform laws to promote equality between women and men and end discrimination against women.”*** Thirty-one percent think the government should *“conduct regular reviews of progress in the pursuit of gender equality.”*

¹ This country data sheet captures findings from a public perception survey on gender equality for Australia. This work is co-led by Focus 2030 and Women Deliver. The survey was executed through an online poll, conducted by Deltapoll, in 17 countries. Approximately one thousand respondents in each country were surveyed in July/August 2020. Demographic data collected included: gender, age, income level, education level, last vote in national elections (where applicable), ethnicity (where applicable), migrant status, and region of residency. In Australia, 1,007 respondents were surveyed, including 517 female respondents and 490 male respondents, and zero respondents who identified “in another way.” Of the 1,007 respondents, 128 were aged 18 to 24, 371 were aged 25 to 44, 246 were aged 45 to 59, and 262 were aged 60 and older. Please see www.focus2030.org and www.womendeliver.org for more information.

² Text in italics and quotes reflect survey response options presented to respondents.

- ➔ No one explanation for gender inequality in Australia had majority agreement. The most widely-believed explanation was *“because unpaid care, domestic work, and parental responsibilities are not shared equally,”* with 41 percent of respondents selecting this as a main reason. Female respondents showed stronger support for this reason than male respondents (46 percent and 34 percent, respectively). *“Because women and men have different employment opportunities”* is also considered an important reason by 35 percent of respondents.



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

- ➔ **Gender-based violence is the top gender equality priority** for respondents in Australia, with 30 percent ranking *“ending violence against women”* as the first priority their government should focus on to improve equality between men and women. Sixty-three percent choose this issue as a top-three priority.
- ➔ To fight gender-based violence in Australia, **58 percent of respondents think that their government should “increase accountability for [perpetrators of] physical and sexual crimes against women.”** Female respondents support this action more than male respondents do (63 percent and 52 percent, respectively). Forty-two percent want the government to *“fund programs to support women who have experienced violence,”* and 41 percent want government action to *“end traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls.”* Only three percent think that the government *“should not work to fight violence against women.”*
- ➔ Fifty percent of respondents in Australia say they, or someone they know, personally feel at risk of assault or harassment in some place or another. The most common place is *“public spaces,”* where 39 percent of female respondents and 31 percent of male respondents feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault or harassment. Twenty-one percent of respondents feel at risk *“online”* and 14 percent *“at home.”*
- ➔ **Female respondents aged 18 to 24 are more likely to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault and harassment in public spaces (53 percent) than female respondents aged 25 and older (36 percent). Female respondents aged 45 to 59 are more likely to feel at risk, or know someone who feels at risk, of assault and harassment in their home (16 percent),** compared to those aged 18 to 24 (11 percent).
- ➔ Two in three respondents in Australia (66 percent) consider it *“unacceptable”* for *“women to always obey their partner,”* while 12 percent consider this *“acceptable.”* Seventy-two percent consider it *“acceptable”* for *“women to refuse sexual intercourse with their partner,”* while ten percent consider this *“unacceptable.”*
- ➔ To *“whistle at a woman in the street, or to touch a woman without her consent”* is deemed *“unacceptable”* by 75 percent of respondents in Australia. Similarly, 60 percent of respondents find it *“unacceptable”* to *“tell or share a sexist joke about a woman with friends or on social media,”* while 15 percent find it *“acceptable.”*
- ➔ Eleven percent of female respondents in Australia say that their *“freedom of movement”* has ever been restricted against their will by family members or a partner. Among female respondents aged 18 to 24, this rises to 22 percent.



WOMEN'S ECONOMIC JUSTICE AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Realizing economic justice and rights is the second most often cited priority** in Australia, as 21 percent of respondents choose *“implement access to well-paid jobs, equal pay, financial independence, and property rights”* as their top priority. Fifty-nine percent choose this issue as a top-three priority.
- ➔ In order to *“improve women’s broader economic opportunities and decision-making powers,”* **47 percent of respondents in Australia think the government should “achieve equal pay for women and men.”** Forty percent think the government should *“prevent violence and sexual harassment in the workplace,”* and 31 percent want the government to *“guarantee social protection and decent working conditions for women in low-paying jobs.”* Only three percent do not want the government to improve women’s economic opportunities and decision-making powers.
- ➔ **Nineteen percent of female respondents in Australia declare that they have not had “the same access to promotion opportunities”** in their job as their male peers. Furthermore, **18 percent say that they are “not paid as much” as their male counterparts** where they work.
- ➔ Eight percent of female respondents have had *“difficulty accessing education and professional training”* compared with their male peers or relatives, and seven percent *“have not received or will not receive the same inheritance”* as their male relatives.
- ➔ Fifty-five percent of respondents in Australia, and 66 percent of female respondents, consider it *“unacceptable”* to *“let women do the majority of housework, childcare and elderly care”* compared to 44 percent of male respondents. Nine percent of female respondents, and 17 percent of male respondents, consider this *“acceptable.”*
- ➔ Sixty-two percent of respondents consider it *“unacceptable”* to *“ask a woman during a job interview whether she has, or would like to have, children.”* And 75 percent of respondents think it is *“unacceptable”* that *“women earn less than men for the same work.”* Overall, female respondents find these statements more unacceptable than male respondents do.
- ➔ Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 18 percent of respondents in Australia say that they *“could not do as many hours of paid work”* as they usually would, and eight percent *“lost [their] job.”* Thirty-one percent of female respondents report that their *“time doing household work has increased”* during the pandemic, compared to 24 percent of male respondents.



FEMINIST MOVEMENTS AND LEADERSHIP

- ➔ **Feminist movements and leadership is the third most often cited gender equality priority**, as 13 percent of respondents select *“improve women’s participation and leadership in politics, and cultural and social movements”* as their top priority. Forty-nine percent of respondents choose this issue as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **To improve women’s representation in leadership and politics, 44 percent of female respondents and 33 percent of male respondents think their government should “achieve equal representation of women in politics.”**

- ➔ **Fifty-six percent of female respondents and 36 percent of male respondents believe that “imposing gender quotas” in all political decision-making bodies is a good way to advance gender equality in Australia.** Support for quotas is more popular among younger respondents (aged 18 to 44, 57 percent) compared to older respondents (aged 45 and over, 35 to 40 percent).



TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Technology and innovation for gender equality is the fourth most often cited priority in Australia,** with seven percent of respondents selecting “invest in technology to improve women’s access to health services, education, and economic opportunities” as the first priority their government should focus on to improve equality between men and women in the country. Thirty-four percent of respondents choose this issue as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **To promote the use of technology and innovation for gender equality, 51 percent of respondents in Australia think their government should “provide equal opportunities for girls and women to study and work in STEM (Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics).”** This action is popular with younger and older respondents — 63 percent of those aged 18 to 24 and 57 percent of those aged 60 and older.
- ➔ Furthermore, 39 percent of respondents think their government should “increase the safety of digital spaces for girls and women.”



BODILY AUTONOMY AND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

- ➔ **Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights is the fifth most often cited priority by respondents in Australia,** as seven percent choose “provide access to contraception and family planning, good maternal health, and sex education in schools” as the top priority their government should focus on. One in four (25 percent) of respondents choose this issue as a top-three priority.
- ➔ In order to improve women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights, **37 percent of respondents in Australia think their government should “increase access to sexual health services.”** Furthermore, 32 percent think their government should “increase access to contraception and family planning options,” and 32 percent also want their government to “increase access to accurate information, including sexual education in schools.” Only six percent do not think the government should improve women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- ➔ **Nine percent of female respondents in Australia have ever had “difficulty accessing [their] chosen method of contraception,”** rising to 15 percent among female respondents aged 25 to 44 and 11 percent among those aged 18 to 24. Additionally, **six percent of female respondents in Australia have ever had “difficulty accessing abortion and post-abortion care,”** rising to 12 percent of female respondents aged 18 to 24.

- ➔ During the COVID-19 pandemic, three percent of female respondents and five percent of male respondents in Australia have had *“difficulties accessing contraception and other sexual health services (including HIV testing and treatment),”* and two percent of female respondents have had *“difficulties accessing abortion options and/or post-abortion care.”*



FEMINIST ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

- ➔ **Feminist action for climate justice is the sixth most often cited priority to improve gender equality in Australia.** Four percent of respondents in Australia choose this area as the top priority their government should focus on, and 17 percent choose it as a top-three priority.
- ➔ **To promote women’s participation in climate change action, 44 percent of respondents in Australia think their government should *“promote the training and hiring of women in jobs related to climate change.”*** Thirty-six percent think their government should *“increase girls’ and women’s participation in the development of solutions to tackle climate change.”*



FINANCING FOR GENDER EQUALITY

- ➔ **Fifty-five percent of respondents think that the Australian government should increase its funding for gender equality in Australia.** This measure is particularly popular among respondents aged 44 and younger (63 percent), compared to respondents aged 45 and older (48 percent). Only ten percent of female respondents and 21 percent of male respondents do not think the government should increase this funding.
- ➔ Respondents would also like their government to increase its funding for international projects and organizations fighting for gender equality around the world, with 46 percent supporting this action and only 21 percent opposing it. Younger respondents are more supportive of this measure (67 percent of respondents aged 18 to 24 and 56 percent of respondents aged 25 to 44) than respondents aged 45 and older (33 percent).



WHAT ACTIONS ARE RESPONDENTS IN AUSTRALIA WILLING TO TAKE?

- ➔ To encourage policymakers to tackle gender inequality, 36 percent of respondents in Australia would be willing to *“vote in an election for a candidate supporting gender equality.”*
- ➔ Thirty-two percent would *“promote gender equality in everyday conversation and interactions”* and *“sign a petition.”* Similarly, 21 percent would *“share information about gender equality on social media.”*

- ➔ Twenty percent would be willing to “purchase or boycott products from companies based on their views on gender equality,” and 15 percent would “make a donation to an organization working on gender equality.”
- ➔ Eleven percent of respondents, and 24 percent of those aged 18 to 24, would be willing to “take part in a demonstration or join a movement” to support gender equality.



IMPACT OF COVID-19

- ➔ In terms of COVID-19, 23 percent of respondents in Australia think that gender inequality will increase as a result of COVID-19, whereas 41 percent do not think this will happen.
- ➔ Eighty percent of respondents “agree” that “women should be involved in all aspects of the global health response and recovery efforts to COVID-19,” and only five percent “disagree.” Sixty-eight percent of respondents also “agree” that the “Australian government’s response to COVID-19 has met the needs of men and women equally,” while 12 percent disagree.

This country data sheet is a supplement to Citizens Call for a Gender-Equal World: A Roadmap for Action, a global report on the findings from a 17-country public perception survey on gender equality. For the full report and all country data sheets, please visit: <http://womendeliver.org/citizens-call-for-a-gender-equal-world/>.