SAGE Cygnet Awards

For the SAGE Athena SWAN Accreditation Pathway

RMIT University Application Form
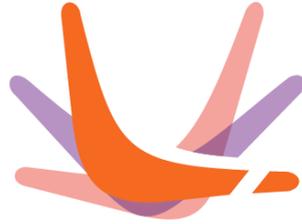
SAGE Cygnet Award Application Barriers to Participation and Career Fulfilment for Parent and Carers at RMIT (Redacted)

Name of Institution	RMIT University
Date of Application	11 August 2023
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RMIT University: SAGE CYGNET #2

Word limit – 2500 words (excluding the institutional context and excluding the action plan)

	✓ Current Cygnet	**Barrier** · List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet · List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier	✓	Barriers to Participation and Career Fulfilment for Parent and Carers at RMIT
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

Section	**Word limit**	**Actual word count**
Cygnet Submission	**2500**	**2186**
Key Barrier		111
Evidence of Barrier		69
Activities and Outputs		68
Outcomes		1443
Impact		495
Future Action Plan	**-**	**2164**

RMIT UNIVERSITY

SAGE Athena SWAN

Cygnet Awards Application 2 Supports for Parents & Carers
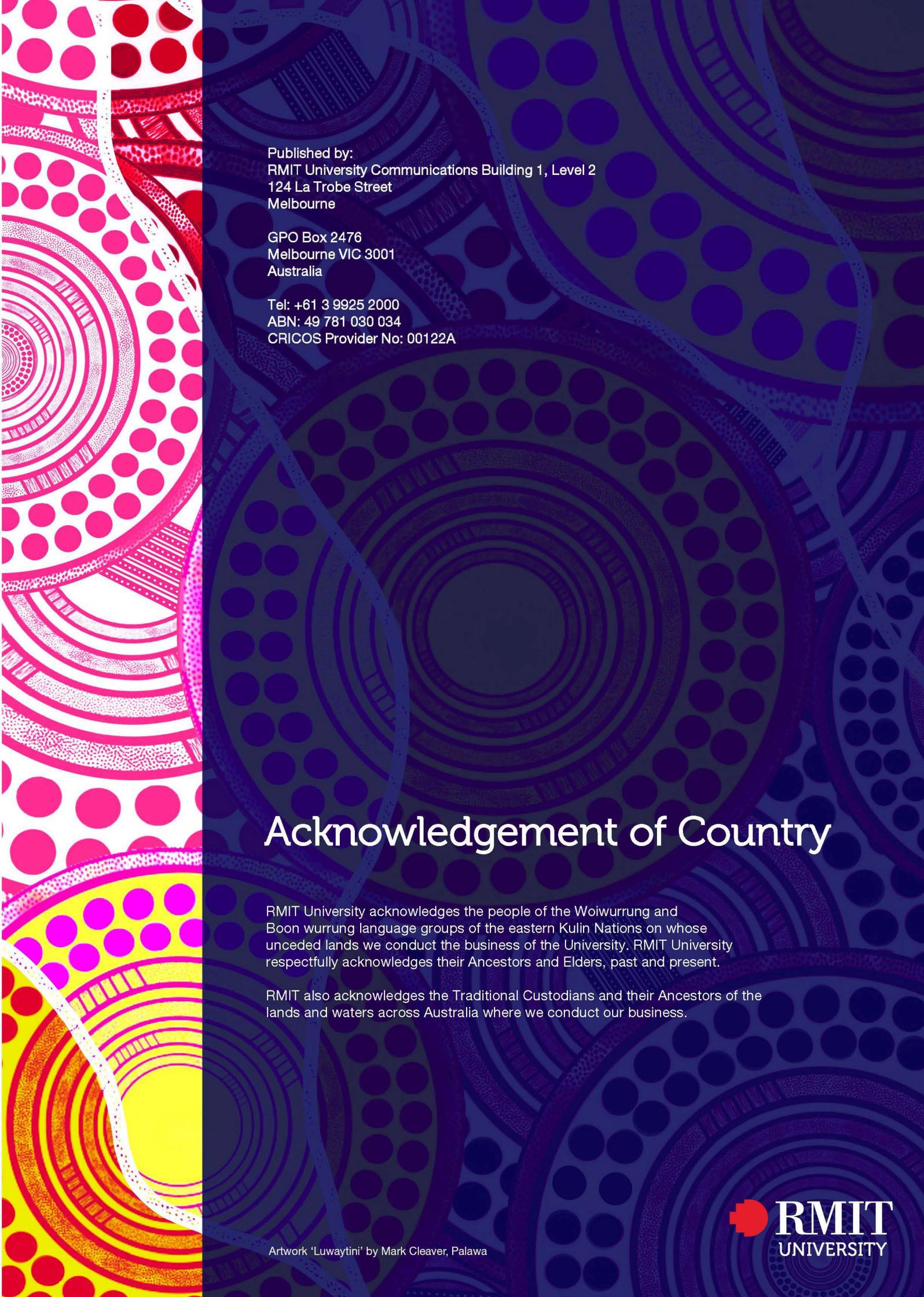
Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woiwurrung and
Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nations on whose
unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University
respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the
lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

Artwork 'Luwaytini' by Mark Cleaver, Palawa

RMIT
UNIVERSITY

CONTENTS

Glossary of Terms

AND	Australian Network on Disability
A./Prof.	Associate Professor (Academic Level D)
ARtO	Achievement Relative to Opportunity
ASSG	Athena SWAN Steering Group
ATN	Australian Technology Network
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
CoB	Country of Birth
CoBL	College of Business & Law
COO	Chief Operating Officer
CoVE	College of Vocational Education
CPO	Chief People Officer
DGSS	Diverse Genders, Sexes and Sexualities
DIAG	Diversity & Inclusion Advocacy Group
DNS	Data Not Shown
DSDI	Dean – STEMM Diversity & Inclusion
DVC	Deputy Vice-Chancellor
FOR	Field of Research
F/T	Fixed-Term
FTE	Full-Time Equivalent
GEDI	Gender, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
HC	Headcount
HDR	Higher Degree by Research
HE	Higher Education
HEW	Higher Education Worker (Professional staff member)
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
PSC	Psychosocial Safety Climate

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Key Barrier

Evidence of Barrier

Key Barrier

Staff experience and/or perceive:

- an inability to balance their career aspirations with their parent/carer responsibilities
- insufficient work flexibility to manage these effectively
- severe impact of long absences (>6 months)/or returning to work part-time on wellbeing, work-life balance and/or career progression.

This Cygnet provides an important opportunity to understand barriers experienced by parents and carers pre-, during- and post-pandemic.

Caveats:

- Excludes RMIT Vietnam /RMIT Europe, except where mentioned cf. Parental Resilience Program.

- Includes Continuing and Fixed-Term staff; excludes Casual Staff

- Includes STEMM/non-STEMM, though initial evidence was gathered during the Bronze application, which emphasised STEMM. Note: the nature of STEMM research, particularly the need to access specialised laboratories or large-scale infrastructure for continuing research, means that the impact of career interruption can be greater for STEMM-focused academics.

- Whilst this submission necessary touches on career progression, particularly academic promotion, a greater body of work emphasising career development will be presented in a later Cygnet application.

Key Barrier

The following sub-issues were identified (also Table 1.):

i)   traditional views of **academic career pathways/**trajectories and subjective 'merit'-based assessment.
ii)   real/perceived **lack of flexibility** for managing career/life responsibilities.
iii)   limited **support for career development/progression** and/or managing career interruption(s).
iv)   real/perceived variations in access/use of **leave entitlements/**flexible arrangements based on work factors.
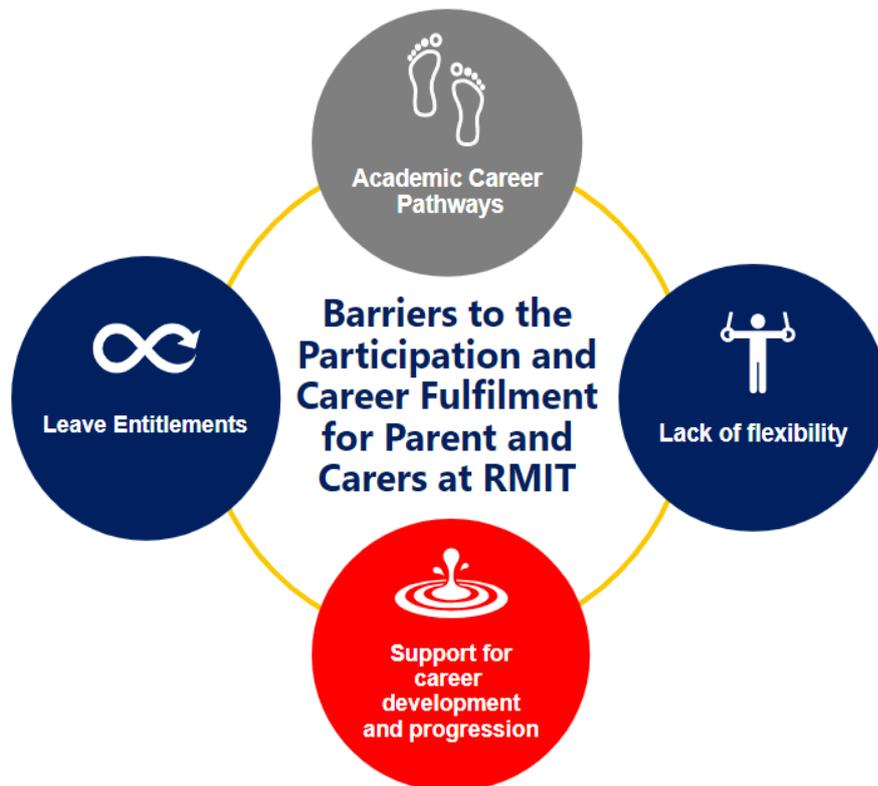
Figure 1: Sub issues identified in the barriers to the participation and career fulfilment for parent and carers at RMIT.

Evidence of Barrier

A variety of qualitative and quantitative data was analysed to understand the impact of this barrier throughout RMIT's Bronze Accreditation review.

Evidence and Bronze Action Plan items are categorised under the identified sub-issues (Table 1).

Data sources included longitudinal culture audits, facilitated workshops and focus (listening) group feedback, interview responses, leave utilisation trends, workforce data (including representation across academic levels), promotion rates, and career fulfilment opportunities.

Table 1: Issues Contributing to and Evidence for Key Barrier. (Action #. – reference RMIT's Athena SWAN Bronze Action Plan 2020-2027)

Issues Contributing 2015-2017			
Academic Career Pathways	**Lack of Flexibility**	**Support for Career Development & Progression**	**Leave Entitlements**
• In 2015, RMIT's promotion success rates (~65%) were lower than the ATN sector (79%), particularly for STEMM females (52%). (Action 3.1) (Figure 2) • Up to 2017 academics applied across the compulsory 3 categories of Teaching, Research, and Engagement, and required to demonstrate Excellent or Outstanding performance and impact according to desired level across all three for success. • Up to 2017, system metrics 'merit' based, heavy on both quantitative – volume/amount and 'quality' of outcomes, particularly traditional research measures of success. Limited understanding and evidence of concepts such as ARtO in-play.	• Focus groups and surveys of staff suggest the need for more flexibility and support for caring responsibilities. (Action 1.5 and 4.1) • Flexible practices supporting inclusive environments experienced inconsistently across the University. (Action 1.2e) • During 2015-2017, approximately 37% females and 16% males utilised formal flexible work arrangements, including: part-time work (25% females; 10% males); flexible work - including purchased leave and compressed work-week (13% females; 6% males). • STEMM Academics take up flexible work at the lowest rate. (10% male: 22% female compared to 14% male: 31% female – all staff). Voice Survey 2017 – 'I have the flexibility to manage my work and caring responsibilities' – Academic level C (58%); VE teachers and senior educators (53-56%) (Table 3); People with a Disability 45% (dropped from 60% in 2015. • Female STEMM staff who have exited advocated for more flexibility.	• Local leadership/ action a critical enabler or disabler to support Parent and Carer inclusion and career progression (Table 4). • Lack of flexibility seen as barrier to promotion i.e. lack of prevalence of academics working part-time and low representation of Women in STEM in leadership positions (33%, 2015; Table 2), of Senior Females (Academic D&E, Executive, HEW10, SE3). (1.2(a)) (Table 2). • Long term career breaks due to caring and parental care considered a barrier to promotion and retention. (1.5 and 4.12,1.2(d)) • Low uptake of sabbaticals and research leave by carers. (Action 4.2) • 2017 Gender Equality survey, 76% respondents reported their manager supported informal flexibility, but felt that flexible working could impede advancement (Table 5) • 2015-2018 part time academic workforce female dominated A – D, male dominated at E in non-STEMM and C-E for 2018 STEMM (Figure 3).	• Legacy entitlements still re-enforced gendered stereotypes. Male or same sex partner staff indicated that the time off they were entitled to was insufficient. • Variation in the ability to access or utilise leave entitlements on the basis of staff cohort, contract type, working environment – gendered impacts for women and primary carers (Action 1.5 - 1.2(a)). • Primary carers leave tenure-based, requiring staff to work 2-3 years to receive full entitlement. Loss of opportunity for talent attraction and retention. • Academics were the least represented cohort among staff taking primary carer leave (24%). (Action 1.5, 4.1j and 4.2c) • Female academics were returning sooner (23-24 weeks) than professional staff (35-36 weeks) with many often continuing their research activity while on leave. (Action 4.2) • Workload management not consistently experienced, and manager dependent.

Note: Changed scope due to COVID and subsequent transition to hybrid working – actions that aimed to address eg. un-met demand for childcare, occasional care, and school holiday programs, no longer relevant or of lesser importance. (Actions 4.1d to 4.1 g).
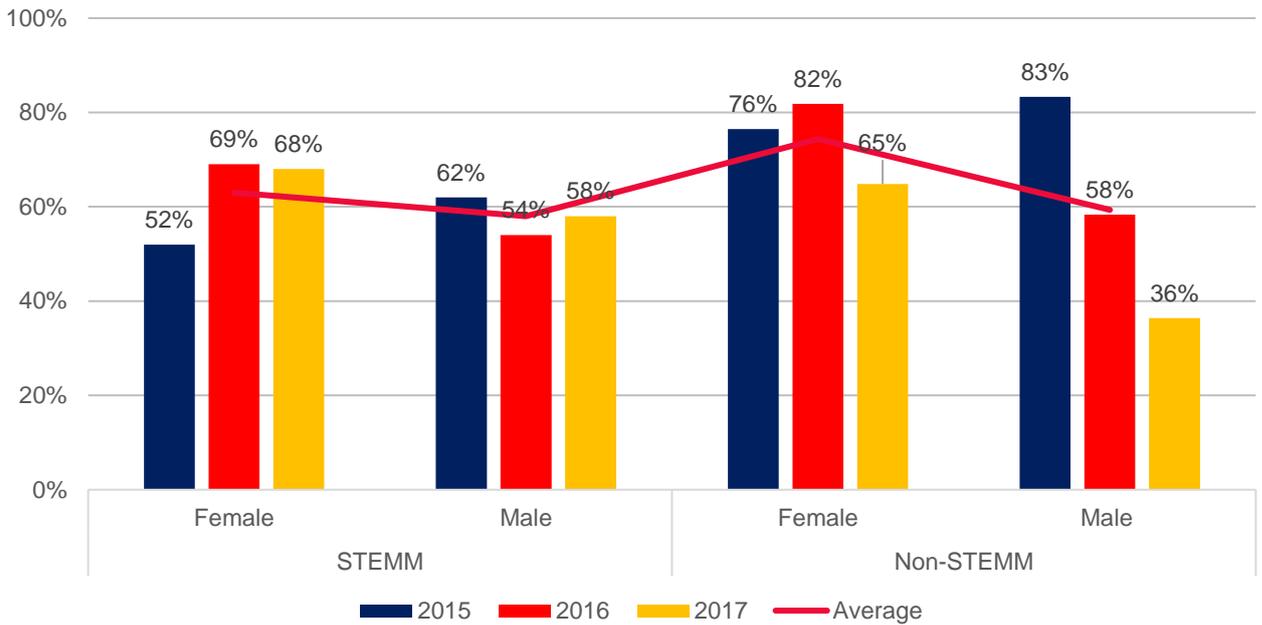
Figure 2: STEMM/Non-STEMM academic promotion Level C-E success rates by gender (%) (2015-2017)

Table 2: % Senior Females – cohort Academic D&E, Executive, HEW10, SE3 in 2015

Year	Executive	Academic	Professional	Vocational Education	All RMIT
2015	30%	28%	52%	38%	33%
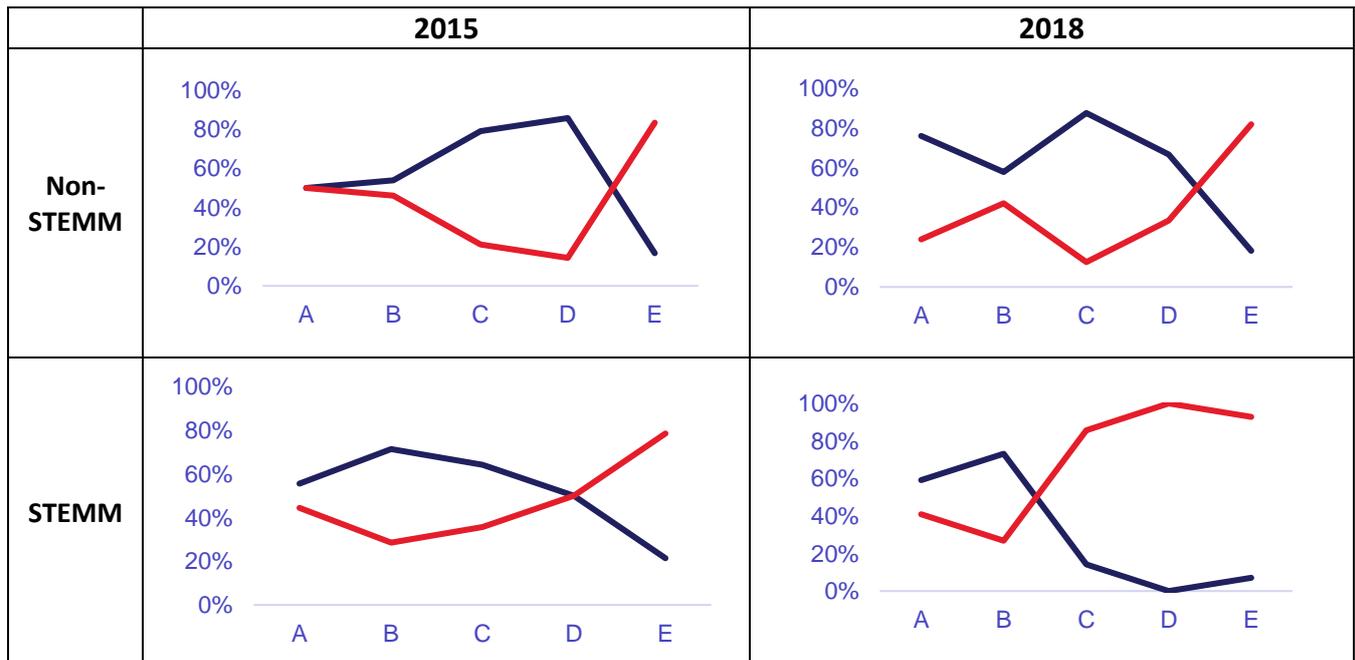
Figure 3: Part-time Academic workforce by level for non-STEMM and STEMM in 2015 and 2018. (Blue: Female, Red: Male)

Table 3: 2017 Survey – results related to flexibility, cohort and level

	Academic			Professional staff (HEW)			VE		Other
	A-B	C	D-E	<7	7-8	9-10	T1-5	SE1-3	
I have the flexibility to manage my work and caring responsibilities	64%	**58%**	62%	75%	68%	78%	53%	56%	76%

Table 4: 2017 Survey – results related to flexibility, career opportunities, manager support – Carers/ Non-carers

Questions	Caring Responsibilities Dependent Children		Caring Responsibilities – All (disability, elderly, two or more of the above)	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and caring responsibilities	69%	68%	61%	70%
There are enough opportunities for my career to progress at RMIT	43%	43%	41%	44%
My workload is manageable	48%	54%	46%	52%
I feel in control and on top of things at work	57%	59%	53%	59%

Table 5: Gender Equality survey results July-August 2017 (n=432)

Item	% Agreed
I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and caring responsibilities	73%
I can advance my career while using flexible work	47%
My immediate supervisor/manager supports informal flexible arrangements	76%

Activities and Outputs

Activities and Outputs

Actions taken to remove or reduce the barrier

- RMIT's range of institutional interventions pre, during and post pandemic period prioritised three focus areas (Figures 4-6; Tables 6-8):
    - Culture of Care
    - Ways of Flexible Working and Entitlements
    - Reducing the Impact of Career Interruptions
- *The COVID-19 pandemic heightened all aspects of experience and wellbeing, including negative and positive career impacts for parents and carers.*

Summary of Issues Contributing 2015 – 2017	**academic career pathways** and trajectories - traditional views and subjective, 'merit'-based assessment. **lack of flexibility** in work arrangements to manage career and life responsibilities. - limited **support for career development**, particularly parent and carers to manage career interruption(s). - varied ability to access or utilise and/or insufficient **leave entitlements.**		
Area of Focus	**Culture of Care**	**Ways of Working and Entitlements**	**Reducing the impact of Career Interruptions**
ACTIONS 2018 – 2022	**A.** 'Culture of Care' Wellbeing Program **B.** **Parent and Carer Inclusion Strategy 2020 - 2021** - Extra leave for carers in 2020 pandemic response - Educational resources for home-schooling - Parental and Carer Resilience Program - BAU Keep in Touch, Transitioning to and from Parental Leave - Increased Employee Assistance Counselling Sessions during COVID.	**C.** **Remote and Hybrid working initiatives** post pandemic - More opportunity for flex arrangements BAU - All roles flex **D.** **Entitlements** 1-4 weeks Partner Leave. 2019-2021 - Changes to eligibility for Parental Leave - point of hire 2022 - Compassionate Leave in relation to loss of child/miscarriage reinforced communicated.	**E.** **Career Reignite Program – all University** **F.** **Academic Promotions** - Achievement Relative to Opportunity ('ARtO') in promotion and piloted in recruitment. - Pandemic impact acknowledged - Parent and Carer status promotion tracked ***Sabbatical Leave** - **ON HOLD** during pandemic, now being revisited. From 2018 – this leave can be taken up locally rather than nationally/ internationally to facilitate caring.

Figure 4: Actions taken during 2018 to 2022 to address issues contributing to the barrier

Continued promotion of Flex working and Parent and Carer Supports

2018 – 2022

01

ARtO in Academic Promotion

Implementation 2018

02

Career Reignite Program

Implementation 2019 onwards

03

Parent and Carer Inclusion Strategy Pandemic Response

Approved Q1 2020

05

All Remote Working Transition

Commenced Q1 2020

04

Culture of Care Interventions

Mental Wellbeing Network
Wellbeing Leave
EAP Counselling
Q1-4 2020

06

Parental and Carer Resilience Supports

Coaching Increase
Carer Entitlements
and Educational
School Resources
Q3 20YY

07

Continued opportunities for flex arrangements

2021

08

Increase in Entitlements

Partner Leave
Eligibility Period for
parental Leave
Compassionate Leave

Q3 2021

09

Transition to Hybrid Working

Commenced Q1 2022

10

Staff Survey Review & BAU RMIT Flex strategy position

Q4 2022

11

2023 Parent and Carer Cygnet

Review and Action Planning

Q1 2023

12

| Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 | Q1 | Q2 | Q3 | Q4 |

2018/19   2020   2021   2022

Figure 5: Timeline of key actions taken to address sub-issues – dates represent start date. The majority are sustained actions

Table 6: Actions, Description and Outputs 2018-2022 - Culture of Care

	Actions to address issues 2018-2022	Description	Outputs
Culture of Care	**A.** '**Culture of Care**' Wellbeing Program	Push for more varied working patterns in 2020/2021. Wellness mechanisms, including - reduced hours/compressed working weeks; flexible working days to fit around other commitments; the taking of leave – annual, long service, additional leave for carers and additional purchased leave options.	• **RMIT Wellbeing Strategy** enacted in 2020. 5 ways to Wellbeing: *Give, Keep learning, Take Notice, Connect, be Active*. • 2020 - **Increase of Employee Assistance counselling services** from x4 sessions to x6 sessions per employee/year. **Change sustained** in 2023. • 2021 – **Slowdown & Wellbeing Weeks** – mid semester 2 & pre–Summer Break (**repeated 2022 and 2023**) – acknowledgement of fatigue of virtual working and lockdown pressures. Slowdowns are now a permanent University calendar approach occurring several times throughout the year. [The first University in Australia to implement such an initiative.] • 2023 Launch of RMIT's new Employee Assistance provider - *Converge* - with **specific carer and elder care** Fastrack hotline. • **RMIT Parent and Carer Yammer Network (online community)** The RMIT Parent and Carer Network is a place to connect, share ideas and learn more about balancing work and family life in a digital platform, available to all RMIT Staff. The group is made up of members from across RMIT, both domestic and international, with group numbers sitting at 423 in 2023.

	B. Parent and Carer Inclusion Strategy 2020 –
	
	Ongoing focus post pandemic recovery and BAU
		Parent and Carers Inclusion Strategy was designed to recognise that the health, safety, and wellbeing of our people is the top priority for our organisation, and this is inclusive of their families and those they provide care for.	**Lockdown Supports**.
			• **Extra 10 days leave** for carers for all staff as a safety gap measure in case of exhaustion of existing leave requirements during 2020 to support caring.
			• Contacting all employees who had taken parental leave in last 5 years and/or had Parental Leave planned during 2020 to share relevant information and offer individual support to all 750 employees directly. Repeated bi-annually since 2020.
			• Extension of the use of Carer's Leave for the purposes of home-schooling requirements.
			• **Home Schooling Supports** – extensive from mid-2020 – RMIT's Early Childhood educators (School of Education) shared 'We Learn' with RMIT staff. Fit-for-purpose educational resources collected and cultivated by educational professionals to support parent and carers home-schooling needs.
			
			Parental Support Programs
			• <u>Parental Resilience Coaching</u> – in 2020 program ran fortnightly catch ups to work through strategies to manage feelings of guilt, stress, and personal expectations heightened through lockdowns. 198 employees engaged with content and offerings.
			• Repeated in 2022 to respond to our return to campus and hybrid work management reaching 42 participants.
			
			• <u>Win-Win Parenting</u> program –practical strategies to support family wellbeing/day to day parenting challenges, in addition to:
			
			    - research on wellbeing, parenting and child development also provided
			    - tips to better manage work and family (stress reduction, increased productivity).
			
			Nearly 300 staff registered in 2022 to either watch the live webinars, catch up on replays online and/or download a range of resources including podcasts, handouts, and articles. There were more than 780 engagements with the program in total.
			
			Continuation since 2017 of RMIT's Parent and Carer <u>programs for those taking long-term parental leave</u>. **'Transitioning to and from Parental Leave'** and **'Keep in Touch'** session for parents on leave.

Figure 6: Examples of the outputs from actions taken to address Culture and Care during the period of 2018 and 2022

Table 7: Actions, Description and Outputs 2018-2022 - Ways of Working & Entitlements

Actions to address issues 2018-2022		Description	Outputs
Ways of Working and Entitlements	**C.** **Remote and Hybrid working initiatives post pandemic**	• Ways of working, digital systems, leadership and staff development, processes, to support flexible and hybrid working. • Reduce gendered impacts on flexible and hybrid working on watch throughout pandemic and post-pandemic including deep analysis of staff survey and internal research support and recommendations. Acknowledgement Women's Research Network Report 2020.	• Enablement of **remote working** – greater access to software and hardware to facilitate this. • Communications – **campaign to normalise flexible and hybrid working practice** – stories showcasing utilisation <u>**of all genders**</u>, including <u>**Rainbow families**</u> – 'permission' extended to broader range of people – for the spectrum of work life needs. • 2022 – RMIT's **Hybrid Ways of Working Principles** introduced as standard. All roles have the potential for flexible work patterns. This includes the minimum requirement to be on campus 4 times per year dependent on your responsibilities in 2022. • **Continued relaunch and articulation of Hybrid working in 2023** to support on campus activities and student services.
	D. **Entitlements** • Changes to eligibility for Parental Leave point of hire 2022 • Changes to Partner Leave provisions. 2019-2021	• Parental Leave is structured to ensure RMIT employee careers will not be disadvantaged by having a child. • Parental Leave is available to all parents or partners of parents, regardless of gender, sexuality or marital status. • Parental Leave is available to employees who have or will have responsibility for the care of a child including: *-the birth of a child to the employee or the employee's partner;* *- the placement of a child under 16 with the employee for adoption;* *- the birth of a child through surrogacy to the employee or the employee's partner; or* *- when a permanent care order is made by the Children's Court, granting custody and guardianship to the employee, or the employee's partner, for a child under 16.*	• As of 2021, **primary carers** are entitled to 18 weeks paid leave at point of hire and between 1-3 years up to 24 four weeks. Previously this benefit was not available at point of hire and required to be accrued. • **Partner Leave** increased from 1 week in 2017 to 2 weeks in 2018 and then 4 weeks' paid leave in 2021. • **New provisions**: - Where a pregnancy terminates by miscarriage or results in still-birth within 20 weeks of the expected date of birth, the employee who was due to give birth will be entitled to **Special Paid Leave** for a period equivalent to half of the Paid Primary Carer's Leave to which they would have otherwise been entitled. Special Paid Leave is not considered to be Paid Primary Carer's Leave. • If a staff member or their partner experiences a miscarriage or stillbirth, 3 days of paid **Compassionate Leave** is available to eligible employees. • The **Return-to-Work Bonus** (long-established, at least since 2002) is designed as an incentive to encourage primary carers who have recently been on a period of Parental Leave to return to the workplace. The bonus is 12 weeks salary which can be used: − *as an allowance to supplement reduced salary due to reduced time fraction on return from parental leave; and/or,* − *other assistance as approved by the University.* • Staff are entitled to 15 days of **Personal Leave** per year. This covers both **Sick** and **Carers' Leave**. Carer Leave provisions have been revised with more expansive definitions since 2017 to include: − *provide care or support to a member of your immediate family or household who is ill or injured;* − *eldercare responsibilities or as a carer of a person with a disability;* − *provide care or support to a member of your immediate family or household who is experiencing an unexpected emergency.* • Since 2017, Parental Provisions have also been aligned to all RMIT Vocational Education employees as a dual sector institute.

Table 8: Actions, Description and Outputs 2018-2022 - Reducing the Impact of Career Interruptions

Actions to address issues 2018-2022	Description	Outputs
E. **Career Reignite Program – all University - established in 2019**	• Established to better support T&R and Research-Only academic staff (all genders; min 0.4FTE; continuing and FT) who experience career interruption(s) which impact on their ability to access research (past 24 months). **Program Objectives** • Improve access and awareness to entitlements where there is a research career pause • Identify services and support through Coaching and Research Career Transition Plans • Provide bespoke, flexible interventions to address individual needs.	• <u>**Coaching sessions**</u> - Access to a series of 3 coaching sessions with accredited external coaches for eligible academic staff (43 participants to-date) • <u>**Funding scheme**</u> - Supports academic staff with recognised evidence of high research achievement and potential, who have experienced career interruption or barriers that have impacted their ability to access research opportunities. Funding in the range of $5,000 -$20,000 (36 funded applicants to date) • <u>2023 - STEM added 6 more to receive funding partnership sister program. 4 STEM only, 2 additional for R&I</u> • **Eligible expenses include** personnel, pilot studies, research translation and collaboration, carer's support, professional development (where appropriate), travel (where appropriate), other direct research resources (e.g., open access journal costs) • Eligible academics can apply for one or both opportunities.
F. **Academic Promotions**	<u>**New System**</u> **(2018 -)** • **Achievement Relative to Opportunity ('ARtO')** in promotion (& piloted in recruitment (2020-). – Applicants can activate to ensure their achievements are considered in light of the opportunities that have been available to them. • **Domain choice in Academic Promotion**	**Achievement Relative to Opportunity** • First introduced in late 2018 and rolled out in the 2019 Academic Promotion round. ARtO statement embedded in application. • ARtO created an option for Parent and Carers to identify and provide clear statements of quality of academic outcomes dependant on the time available. **Success rates/applications were then tracked and reviewed for a variety of reasons including parent and carer responsibilities (2021 -)**. • For 2020, 2021 and 2022 a generic **ARtO lens re COVID-19 applied to all applicants**. Allowed assessors to consider impact pandemic may have had on applicant's ability to prepare their case for promotion and impact on academic practice. • For 2021- applicants activating ARtO were encouraged **to indicate which Research or Education criteria they would like to exclude or modify**, although they could still ask for a general consideration. • Aligning with extension of ARtO into Recruitment (Cygnet 1) a new policy – ARtO across the employee lifecycle was created in 2021. **Domain Choice** • Applicants **now choose to apply under 2 domains** – Engagement & Education or Engagement & Research – **or all 3**, thus providing <u>equal access</u> to promotion for all academics whether their careers are teaching- or research-focused or evenly spread.

Reducing the Impact of Career Interruption

Outcomes

Outcomes

The evidence of the barrier being reduced and/or removed: WELL PROGRESSED

- In 2020, people with caring responsibilities faced an extremely difficult period with lockdowns that closed schools and childcare centres, and limited access to other care services for children, the elderly, and people with disability.

- In addition to actions identified in the SAGE Athena SWAN Bronze submission, RMIT knew that the people most likely to be impacted by increased caring needs in the pandemic would disproportionally be women (Table 18). A concerted effort was thus made to provide additional supports to all staff, with a focus on parents and carers (such as flex working options, home-schooling supports and parental/caring support programs).

In response to COVID-19 lockdowns, in 2021, RMIT was the first university to grant extra leave days

- Through retrospective analysis, it can be shown that the programs of work and interventions put in place, such as implementation of the Parent and Carer Leave policy, process, and programs at RMIT before, during and after the pandemic, together with actions to reduce the impact/prepare staff better for a career interruption, have had a significant impact on employees, providing strong foundations for all to have a well-rounded and impactful career whilst also maintaining other life commitments.

- However, it also highlighted that some pressures and anxieties persist, particularly for academic staff, where continued long-term leave is still a stressor to an academic career. Academic and Vocational staff require continued and ongoing additional support re career promotion, workload, and development interventions (ACTION 2h;3a-i).

- Carers of people with a disability and/or providing eldercare also require further supports (ACTION 1f, 2g).

Culture of Care

Desired Outcome – improved culture and embedding of *'bringing one's whole self to work'* approach. Open appreciation and matching supports for all staff (and students) to better achieve work-life balance – pressures that were always there but heightened and forever changed by the pandemic in 2020/2021.

WELL PROGRESSED.

Staff Wellbeing

Nearly 5000 staff took over 23,200 days of additional Wellbeing Leave in 2021. Vocational Education (VE) staff took the highest percentage; Academic staff used it least (Table 9).

We saw a small but significant increase (~10%) in **Psychosocial Safety Climate (PSC)** after the new Wellbeing Leave was announced, suggesting that small interventions affect how RMIT is perceived as a mentally-healthy workplace. PSC indicates future wellbeing trends and keeps people well; a PSC boost protects against symptoms of burnout, depression and other psychological injuries.

The Wellbeing strategy equipped managers to support staff during COVID and beyond. Increased management capability led to increased staff sentiment for Academics (60% 2019–68% 2022) and Professionals (71% 2019–79% 2022) re: "***My manager is a good role model for staff***".

Table 9: Leave records 2021. Utilisation of wellbeing leave

	Academic	Professional	VE
Number of staff who took Wellbeing Leave	1208	2284	320
2021 headcount*	2058	3420	416
% utilisation	59%	67%	77%

*continuing and fixed-term staff

Parent/Carer Inclusion Strategy 2020

Overall, RMIT offered more parental support programs for:

All parents

- – Parental and Carer Resilience Program (Table 10)
- – Win-Win Parenting (Table 11)
- – Home schooling supports

Those taking long-term parental leave

- – Keep in Touch (Table 12)
- – Transitioning to, Transitioning from,
- – Individualised entitlement plan.

All staff cohorts engaged with the programs - majority being Professional staff (Table 10 to Table 13), with positive participant feedback (See Impact).

- Further action required to understand which delivery methods (face-to-face, hybrid, self-managed recordings, etc.) are suited to Academic and VE cohorts (ACTION 1e).

- Awareness-raising campaigns need to reach wider audiences. (ACTION 1b-c, e; 2b-c).

- Continue Slowdown weeks (ACTION 1a)

Table 10: Parental Resilience Program Participation

		2020	2022
Gender	Female	77%	62%
	Male	18%	38%
Employee contract	Continuing	87%	83%
	Fixed-term	8%	17%
	Full time		50%
	Part-time		38%
Staff cohort	Academic	10%	12%
	Professional	85%	76%
Total Number of participants		198	42

EXAMPLE CONTENT - Parental and Carer Resilience Program 2022 Topics covered included:

Workshop 1: What does 'good enough' look like at work and home during lockdown?
  Reflection, coaching & ideas on how to reconcile what is essential / nice to have / high performing as a working parent during lockdown.

Workshop 2: Guilt
  How to cope with the guilt of being a working from home parent and carer whilst trying to home school and balance the family and organisation's needs.

Workshop 3: Values
  Assessment, realignment, and tangible actions around personal and professional values.

Workshop 4: Lifestyle Recipe
  How to balance all the ingredients of your hectic lifestyle and recognise where you need to put more effort.

 Workshop 5: Energy Management
 How to work out where you get energy from and where it goes – finding balance.

Table 11: Attendees of the 2022 Win-Win parenting program by staff cohort – headcount and % breakdown

	Academic	Professional	VE	Total
2021 attendees				**197**
2022 attendees	29	229	8	**266**
2022 % utilisation	11%	86%	3%	

Table 12: Overall enrolments in Keep in touch, transitioning to and from programs

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total
Program Enrolments	12	17	26	22	26	103
Count of Parental Leave	145	162	192	168	196	863
% Utilisation	8%	10%	14%	13%	13%	12%

Table 13: Participation by staff cohort in programs for people taking long-term parental leave – HC and % Utilisation

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Total	% utilisation 2018 - 2022
Keep in Touch	**6**	**9**	**15**	**11**	**16**	**57**	
Academic	<6	<6	<6	<6	<6	15	26%
Professional	<6	7	11	6	12	40	70%
Vocational Education			<6			<6	4%
Managing the Transition back from Parental Leave	**<6**	**<6**	**6**	**10**	**<6**	**28**	
Academic		<6		<6	<6	<6	11%
Professional	<6	<6	6	9	<6	25	89%
Vocational Education						0	0%
Managing the Transition to Parental Leave	**<6**	**<6**	**<6**	**<6**	**<6**	**18**	
Academic						0	0%
Professional	<6	<6	<6	<6	<6	16	89%
Vocational Education		<6			<6	<6	11%
All Programs	**12**	**17**	**26**	**22**	**26**	**103**	
Academic	<6	<6	<6	6	<6	18	17%
Professional	10	13	22	16	20	81	79%
Vocational Education		<6	<6		<6	<6	4%

Ways of Working

> <u>Desired Outcome</u> – improved flexible working options, improved uptake by a more diverse staff cohort.
> WELL PROGRESSED.

Flexible Working: Remote/Hybrid working initiatives

Informal Flexible Working

- Informal flexible working through work-from-home (WFH) shifted fundamentally due to COVID-19 lockdowns and the consequent WFH/office work balance from 2020. <u>Hybrid working has become the norm</u>.

- In 2022 (Table 15 and Table 16) the top form of flexible work accessed for all cohorts was '*work from home/remotely*', followed by '*flexible start and finish times*', '*part-time work*', and '*work from other locations within RMIT*'.

  Flexible working enabled '*care of children*' and to '*manage the demands of their roles more effectively*'. Those without caring responsibilities commonly selected '*management of life balance*' and '*pursue other interests.*' Those with a disability and/or caring, commonly selected to '*manage my health or disability*'.

Formal Flexible Working

- Formal flexibility rates were impacted by the pandemic. Following a University push in 2020, men increasingly used formal flexibility. The gender gap continues to reduce and has almost halved since 2019 (Table 14).
- Formal flexibility arrangements at RMIT reduced in 2022 for everyone, but particularly for women, as hybrid working allowed for more informal forms of flexible (Table 14).

Table 14: Formal flexibility rates (e.g., reduced time fraction, purchased leave, compressed working). Note significantly reduced gap in accessing flexibility for men and women 2019 - 2023.

Cohort	Total	Men	Women	Gap
2015	25.0%	15.0%	35.0%	20.0%
2016	25.3%	15.0%	35.6%	20.6%
2017	25.7%	15.4%	36.0%	20.6%
2018	24.9%	15.3%	34.5%	19.2%
2019	25.5%	14.8%	34.5%	19.7%
2020	27.5%	19.3%	34.0%	14.7%
2021	26.0%	18.4%	31.6%	13.2%
2022	20.7%	14.5%	25.4%	10.9%
2023	20.4%	14.7%	24.7%	10.0%

Table 15: 2022 All-Staff Survey – Further investigation of Flexible Work Uptake by Type by Staff Cohort, including those with a Disability, Caring, non-Caring

What forms of flexible work have you accessed in the last 12 months?	All RMIT	Caring Yes	Caring No	VE	Academic	Professional	All Caring Y Cont	All Caring Y Fixed Term	All Caring N Cont	All Caring N Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Cont	Academic Caring Y Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Total	Academic Caring N Total	Professional Caring Y Cont	Professional Caring Y Fixed Term	Professional Caring Y Total	Professional Caring N Total	VE Caring Y Cont	VE Caring Y Fixed Term	VE Caring Y Total	VE Caring N Total	Disability Yes	Disability No	Disability Yes Caring Y	Disability Yes Caring N	Disability No Caring Y	Disability No Caring N
Other	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Job share	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Part time work	5%	6%	6%	10%	5%	5%	6%	6%	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	5%	6%	7%	6%	3%	10%	9%	10%	11%	7%	5%	7%	7%	6%	4%
Work from home/remotely	45%	44%	44%	47%	47%	45%	44%	43%	48%	44%	47%	44%	46%	46%	43%	41%	43%	47%	44%	46%	46%	53%	41%	46%	40%	42%	44%	47%
Flexible start and finish times	33%	34%	34%	26%	35%	33%	33%	35%	32%	33%	34%	37%	35%	35%	34%	35%	34%	32%	24%	30%	26%	25%	33%	33%	32%	35%	34%	32%
Not working flexibly	2%	2%	2%	6%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	8%	2%	6%	4%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
Work from other RMIT locations	8%	8%	8%	5%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	10%	8%	9%	9%	7%	8%	7%	8%	9%	6%	5%	6%	3%	9%	8%	9%	8%	8%	9%
Compressed hours	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	0%	2%	1%	4%	3%	4%	3%	3%	2%
Purchased leave/ leave at half pay	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	3%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	2%	3%	2%	2%

Table 16: 2022 All-Staff Survey – Further investigation of Flexible Work – Reason for Usage by Staff Cohort, including those with a Disability, Caring, non-Caring

If you are working flexibly, this is to enable you to:	All RMIT	VE	Academic	Professional	Caring Yes	Caring No	All Caring Y Cont	All Caring Y Fixed Term	All Caring N Cont	All Caring N Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Cont	Academic Caring Y Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Total	Academic Caring N Total	Professional Caring Y Cont	Professional Caring Y Fixed Term	Professional Caring Y Total	Professional Caring N Total	VE Caring Y Cont	VE Caring Y Fixed Term	VE Caring Y Total	VE Caring N Total	Disability Yes	Disability No	Disability Yes Caring Y	Disability Yes Caring N	Disability No Caring Y	Disability No Caring N
% manage my health	16%	14%	14%	17%	14%	14%	14%	15%	18%	17%	13%	14%	13%	15%	14%	16%	14%	19%	13%	14%	14%	12%	20%	15%	19%	23%	13%	17%
% care for my grandchildren	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
% care for my children	13%	11%	15%	13%	21%	21%	21%	19%	1%	1%	23%	23%	23%	1%	21%	17%	20%	1%	16%	16%	16%	1%	10%	14%	14%	1%	22%	1%
% care for elderly	5%	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%	7%	6%	1%	2%	7%	4%	6%	2%	6%	7%	7%	1%	9%	6%	8%	2%	5%	4%	7%	1%	6%	2%
% care for a friend or relative with disability	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	3%	2%	1%	0%	2%	1%	2%	0%	3%	2%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	1%
% live in a regional/remote location	4%	6%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%	4%	4%	4%	4%	6%	1%	5%	8%	4%	4%	5%	1%	4%	4%
% study	6%	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%	4%	6%	6%	8%	4%	8%	6%	6%	4%	6%	4%	6%	7%	4%	6%	8%	6%	5%	6%	5%	4%	7%
% pursue other interests	6%	5%	5%	7%	4%	4%	3%	5%	10%	11%	2%	4%	3%	7%	4%	6%	5%	11%	2%	4%	3%	10%	7%	7%	5%	10%	4%	11%
% manage the demands of my role more effectively	19%	20%	22%	18%	17%	17%	17%	17%	23%	23%	20%	19%	20%	30%	17%	15%	16%	21%	17%	26%	19%	26%	15%	20%	14%	18%	18%	23%
% manage my disability	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	10%	0%	9%	12%	0%	0%
% manage my life balance	25%	22%	24%	26%	23%	23%	23%	22%	30%	29%	21%	21%	21%	28%	24%	23%	24%	31%	20%	20%	20%	25%	20%	26%	17%	24%	24%	30%
% not working flexibly	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	4%	1%	3%	4%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%
% Other	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%	1%	2%

- Across cohorts, VE staff remain the highest users of formal flexibility, particularly part-time work - possibly due to holding concurrent industry positions to ensure skills remain up to date, and the least able to make use of informal, hybrid working options (Table 15 and Table 16; Impact) due to the more intensive nature of VE teaching and in-person assessments. However, the staff have similar external responsibilities and needs.

- The part-time Academic workforce profile changed significantly from 2018-2022. STEMM/non-STEMM patterns also changed (Figure 7 and Figure 8). The numbers of staff working part-time have increased considerably and since 2019, the gendered gap across A-E has narrowed. In STEMM, 2020 revealed the most gender-equitable A-E profile, which has since diverged. For non-STEMM, the change took longer but the profile sustained across 2022. These changes may imply that part-time work has become more attractive. Possibly, male Academic staff feel more comfortable with it. Additionally, with ARtO used more widely in decision-making, and other positive messaging, a successful career is considered attainable alongside managing wellbeing and external responsibilities. However, in terms of headcount, STEMM has become more equitable, while non-STEMM is still female-dominated. ACTION 2g-h

- Continue to embed flexibility for all staff; ongoing analysis and intersectional review.
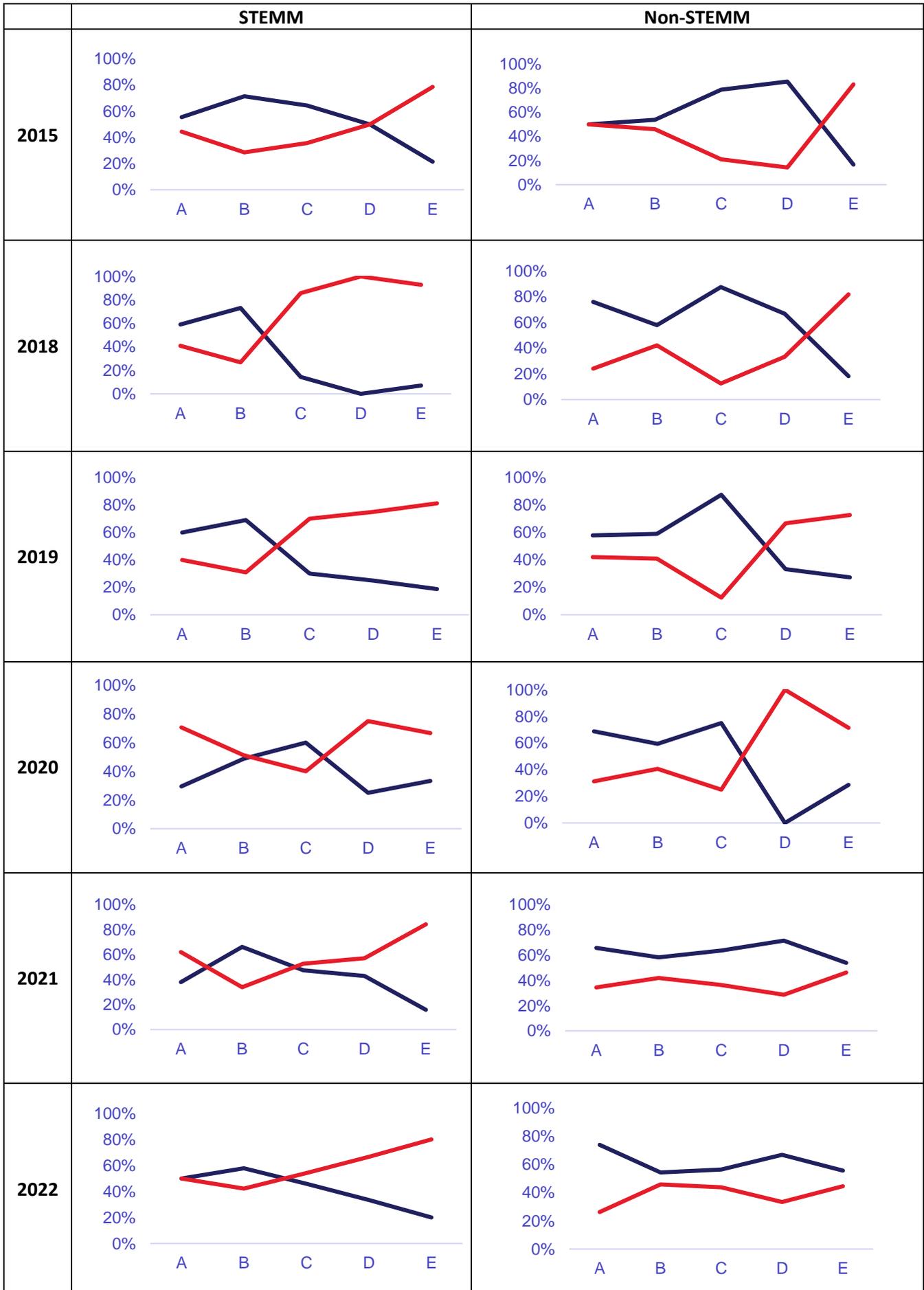
*Figure 7: Part-time Academic workforce by level for STEMM & non-STEMM in 2015-2022. (**Blue: Female**, **Red: Male**)*

a)
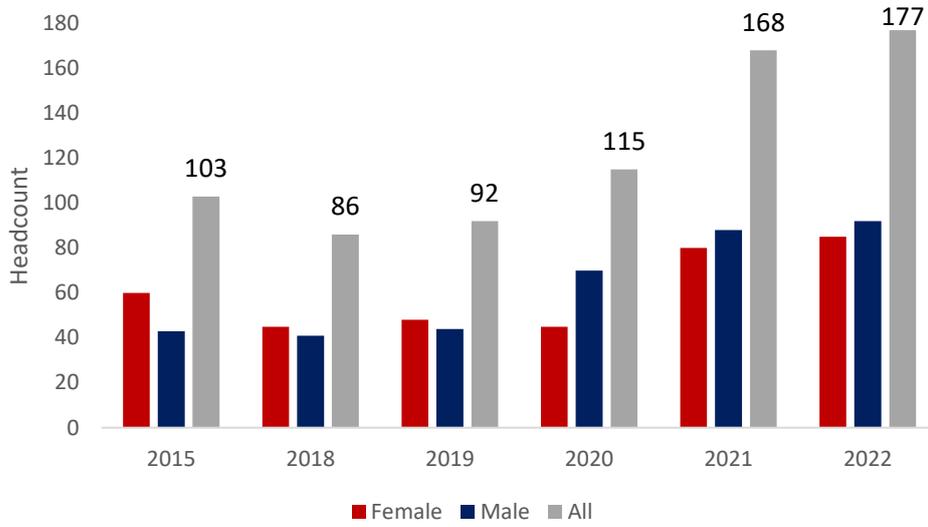
b)
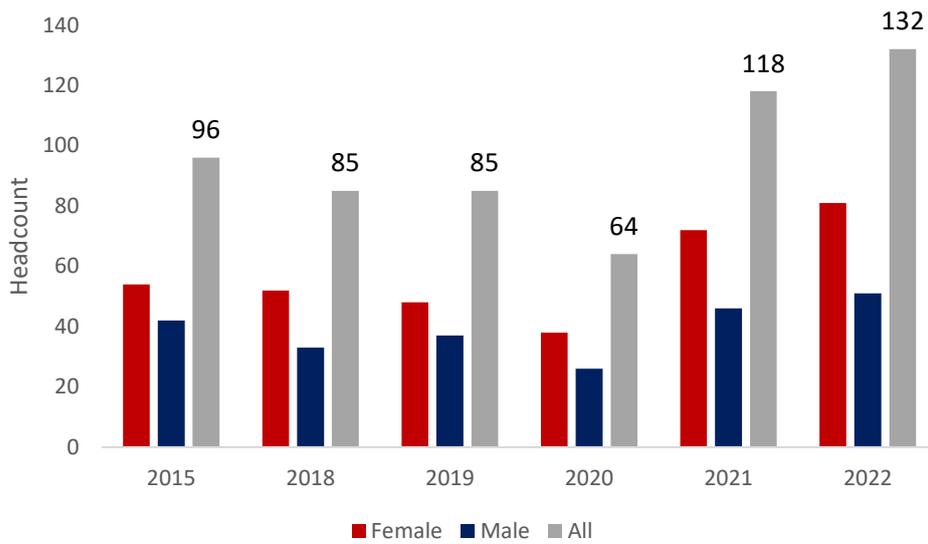
Figure 8: Part-time Academic workforce by Gender and Headcount for a) STEMM and b) non-STEMM, 2015-2022.
(Red: Female, Blue: Male, Grey: All)

Entitlements

> <u>Desired Outcome</u> – increased leave entitlements, particularly parental partners, reduction/removal of leave eligibility hurdles, improved uptake by a more diverse staff cohort. WELL PROGRESSED.

Carers' Leave utilisation analysis
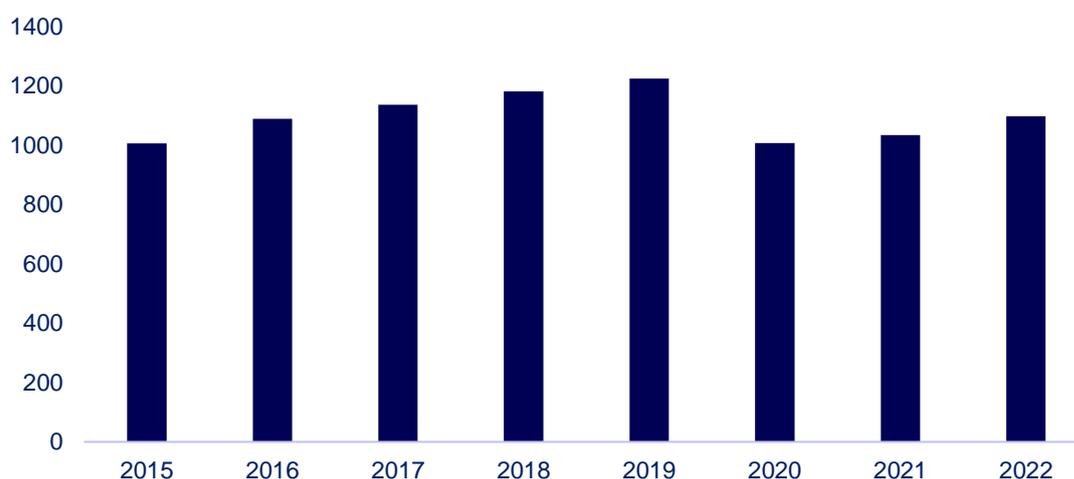
Figure 9: Count of incidences of carers' leave for all staff cohorts across years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Count	1006	1089	1136	1182	1224	1007	1034	1097

- Carers' Leave steadily increased pre-pandemic then drastically decreased in 2020, with working from home and informal flexible working arrangements during lockdowns. Since 2020, Carers' Leave use has increased but not to pre-pandemic levels, reflecting increased use of informal flexibility (Figure 9).

- Fixed-term staff used Carers' Leave at lower rates than Continuing staff (Figure 10, Table 17).

- Male and female professional staff use the highest rates of Carers' Leave (Figure 11, Table 18).

- Carers' Leave is gendered, with women at higher rates than men. The gender gap in usage (2015-2022) for Professionals is narrower than for other cohorts (11%).
    - Showcase diverse caring role models/situations of care (ACTION 1b-c, e, m-o)

- Monitor trends; assess the impact of changed entitlements and adjustments to hybrid working (ACTION 2a, d, g, h) including review of different types of caring responsibilities (ACTION 1f, 2a, d, g-i).
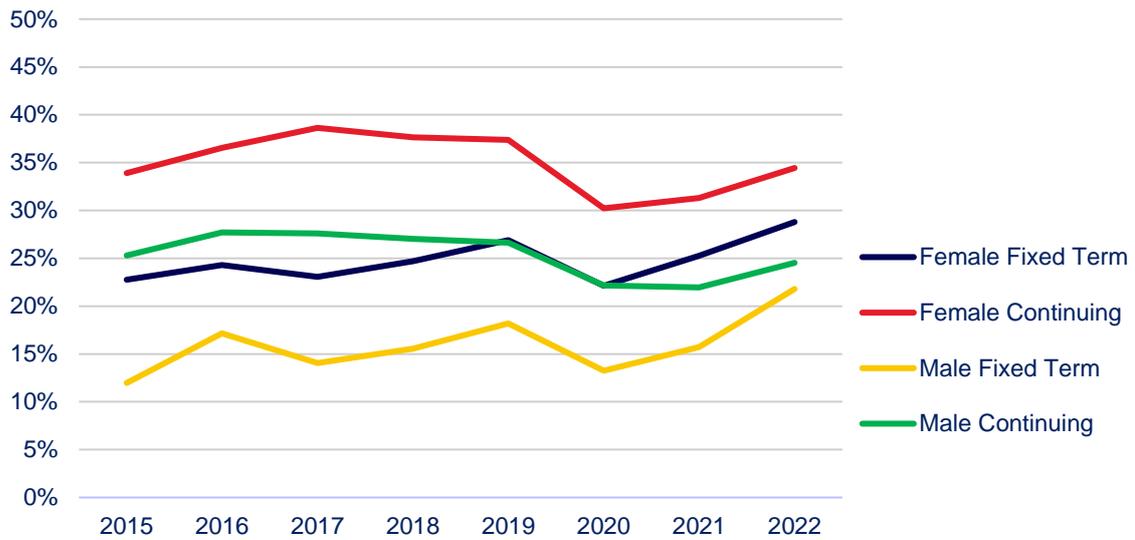
Figure 10: Percentage utilisation of carers' leave by sub-work contract type across years

Table 17: Incidences and utilisation rates of Carers' Leave by sub-work type between 2015 and 2022

Carers Leave – Fixed Term						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	92	62	404	518	23	12
2016	110	88	453	513	24	17
2017	134	83	581	591	23	14
2018	157	86	636	553	25	16
2019	185	99	688	544	27	18
2020	158	85	714	641	22	13
2021	182	101	720	643	25	16
2022	241	148	837	679	29	22
Carers Leave – Continuing						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	626	371	1846	1467	34	25
2016	672	407	1839	1469	37	28
2017	712	413	1843	1496	39	28
2018	737	432	1957	1598	38	27
2019	773	440	2068	1653	37	27
2020	642	353	2124	1592	30	22
2021	681	352	2176	1603	31	22
2022	714	382	2074	1558	34	25
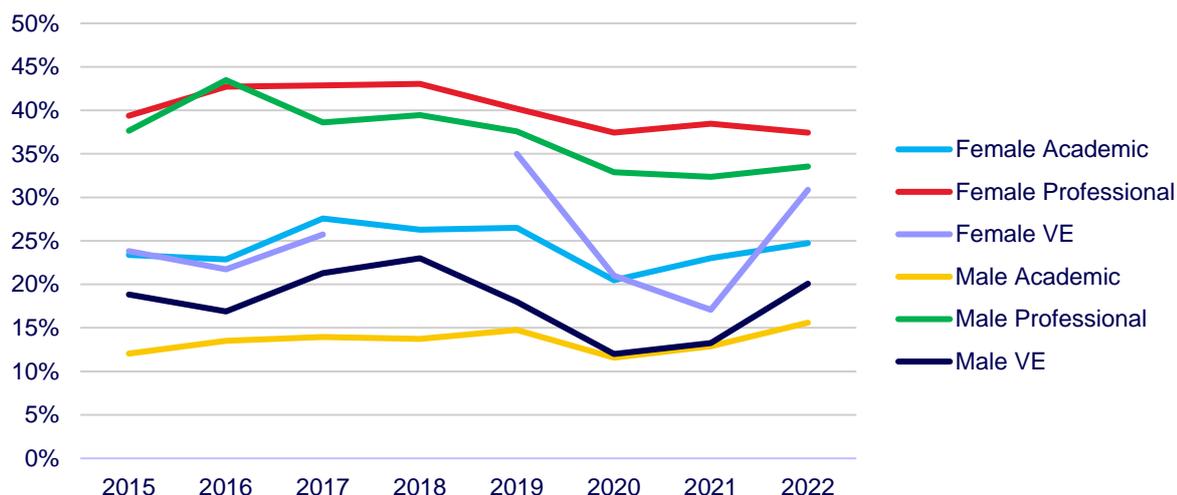
Figure 11: Percentage utilisation of carers' leave by job classification across years. Data unavailable for VE women 2018 2019 2020

Table 18: Incidences and utilisation rates of Carers' Leave by job classification between 2015 and 2022

Carers' Leave – Academic

	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	126	106	539	879	23	12
2016	129	122	564	903	23	14
2017	177	131	642	939	28	14
2018	190	132	723	961	26	14
2019	199	146	751	988	26	15
2020	155	110	757	950	20	12
2021	189	131	821	1017	23	13
2022	253	189	1023	1212	25	16

Carers' Leave – Professional

	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	582	325	1478	863	39	38
2016	637	363	1491	835	43	43
2017	669	354	1561	917	43	39
2018	705	376	1638	953	43	39
2019	751	390	1869	1038	40	38
2020	644	326	1720	991	37	33
2021	683	320	1776	989	38	32
2022	707	344	1888	1025	37	34

Carers' Leave – VE

	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	50	45	210	239	24	19
2016	48	41	221	243	22	17
2017	53	49	206	230	26	21
2018	58	39	NA	168	56	23
2019	64	44	NA	238	35	18
2020	48	28	NA	235	21	12
2021	35	28	205	211	17	13
2022	67	42	217	209	31	20

Parental Partner Leave
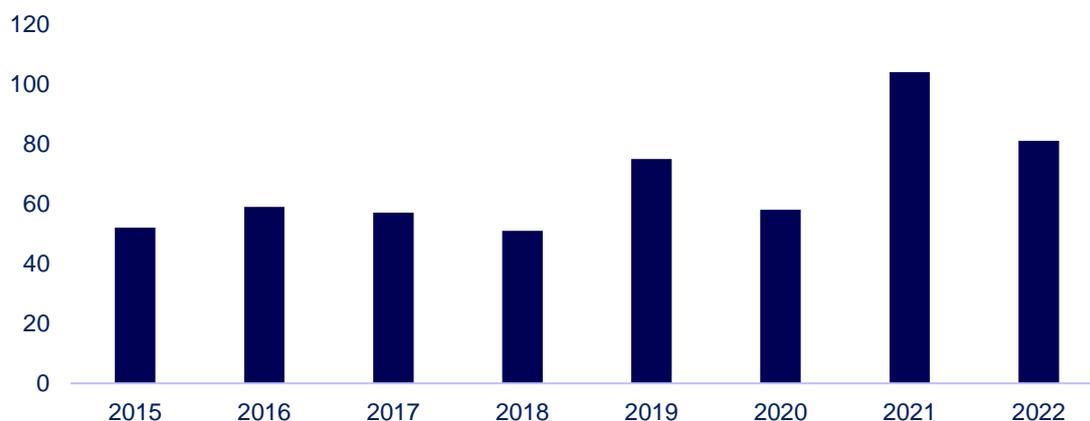
Figure 12: Count of incidences of parental partner leave for all staff cohorts across years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Count of incidences of parental partner leave	52	59	57	51	75	58	104	81

- Parental Partner Leave was steady to 2018. Its 2019 peak quickly dropped in 2020 before increasing by 40% in 2021, with continued high rates in 2022. This may relate to an increased birth rate in 2021 (*Australian Institute of Family Studies 2023 Report*).

- Increased Parental Partner Leave also came into effect in Q3 2021 (Figure 12).

- Parental Partner Leave is highly gendered and almost exclusively taken up by men. Male staff on Continuing contracts use this leave at twice the rate of those on Fixed-Term contracts (Figure 13, Table 19).

- Male professional staff have higher utilisation rates (Figure 14, Table 20).

- Monitor trends to assess the impact of entitlements changes (ACTION 2a).
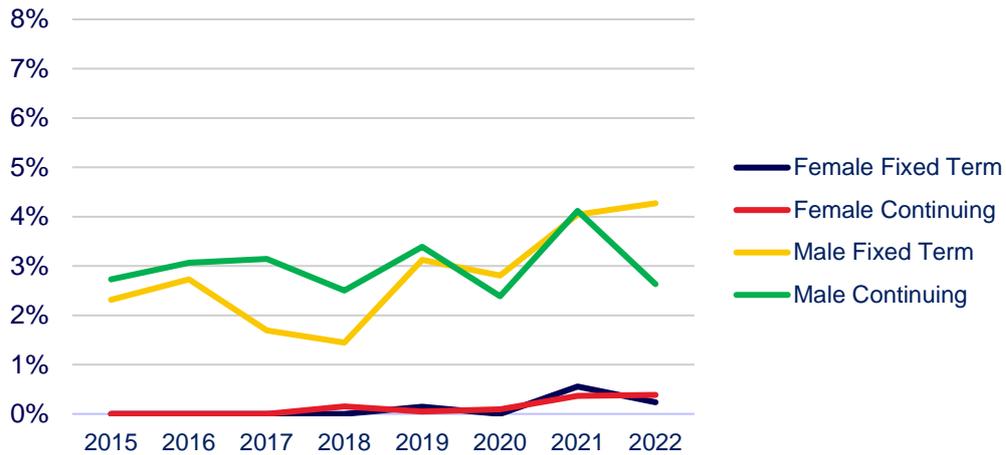
Figure 13: Percentage utilisation of parental partner leave by sub-work type across years

Table 19: Incidences and utilisation rates of Parental Partner Leave by sub-work type between 2015 and 2022

Parental Partner Leave - Fixed term						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	0	12	404	518	0	<6
2016	0	14	453	513	0	<6
2017	0	10	581	591	0	<6
2018	0	8	636	553	0	<6
2019	<6	17	688	544	0	<6
2020	0	18	714	641	0	<6
2021	<6	26	720	643	<6	<6
2022	<6	29	837	679	0	<6
Parental Partner Leave - Continuing						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	0	40	1846	1467	0	<6
2016	0	45	1839	1469	0	<6
2017	0	47	1843	1496	0	<6
2018	<6	40	1957	1598	0	<6
2019	<6	56	2068	1653	0	<6
2020	<6	38	2124	1592	0	<6
2021	8	66	2176	1603	<6	<6
2022	8	41	2074	1558	0	<6
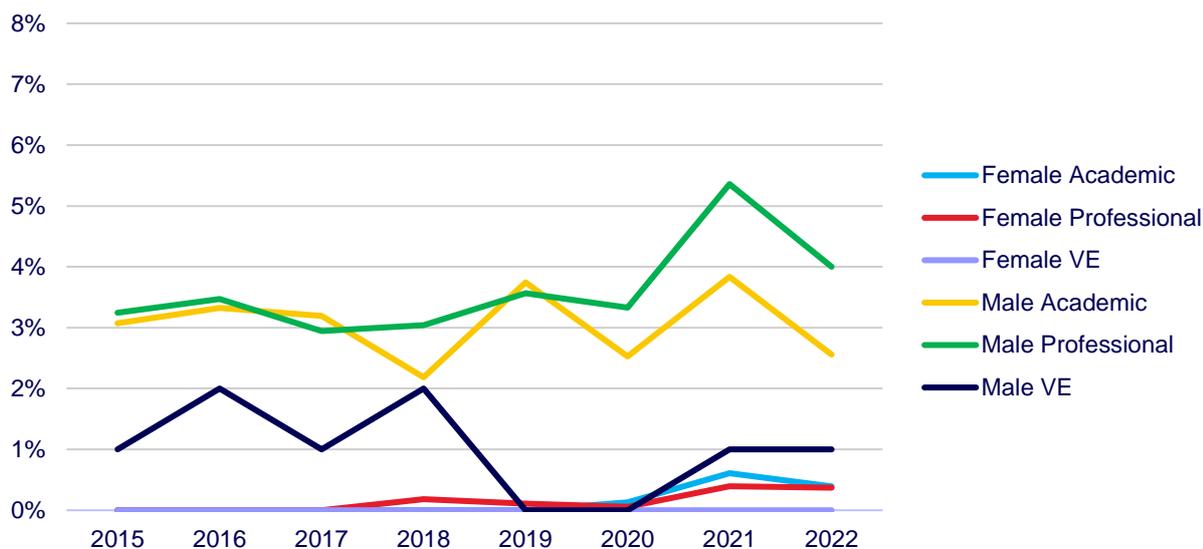
Figure 14: Percentage utilisation of parental partners leave by job classification across years

Table 20: Incidences and utilisation rates of Parental Partner Leave by job classification between 2015 and 2022

| Parental Partner Leave – Academic						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	0	27	539	879	0	<6
2016	0	30	564	903	0	<6
2017	0	30	642	939	0	<6
2018	0	21	723	961	0	<6
2019	0	37	751	988	0	<6
2020	<6	24	757	950	0	<6
2021	<6	39	821	1017	<6	<6
2022	<6	31	1023	1212	0	<6
Parental Partner Leave – Professional						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	0	28	1478	863	0	<6
2016	0	29	1491	835	0	<6
2017	0	27	1561	917	0	<6
2018	<6	29	1638	953	0	<6
2019	<6	37	1869	1038	0	<6
2020	<6	33	1720	991	0	<6
2021	7	53	1776	989	0	<6
2022	7	41	1888	1025	0	<6
Parental Partner Leave – VE						
	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
Year	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	0	<6	210	239	0	<6
2016	0	<6	221	243	0	<6
2017	0	<6	206	230	0	<6
2018	0	<6	NA	168	0	<6
2019	0	<6	NA	238	0	0
2020	0	0	NA	235	0	0
2021	0	<6	205	211	0	<6
2022	<6	<6	217	209	0	<6
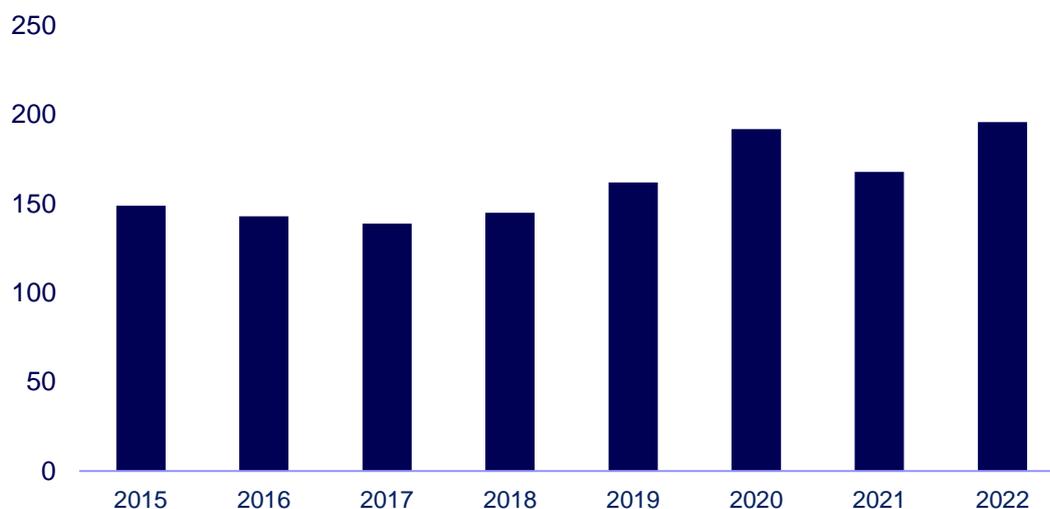
Figure 15: Count of incidences of parental leave for all staff cohorts across years

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Count of incidences of parental leave	149	143	139	145	162	192	168	196

- Parental Leave has increased yearly since 2019 (Figure 15).

- Utilisation is predominantly by women on Continuing contracts, followed by those on Fixed-Term arrangements (Figure 16, Table 21).

- Academic women use Parental Leave at lower rates than Professional women (Figure 17, Table 22).
  - o Trends will be monitored (ACTION 2a).
  - o Raise awareness of parental leave entitlements (ACTION 2b-d,).
  - o Explore opportunities for prenatal, IVF and/or fertility treatment parental leave access (ACTION 2e).
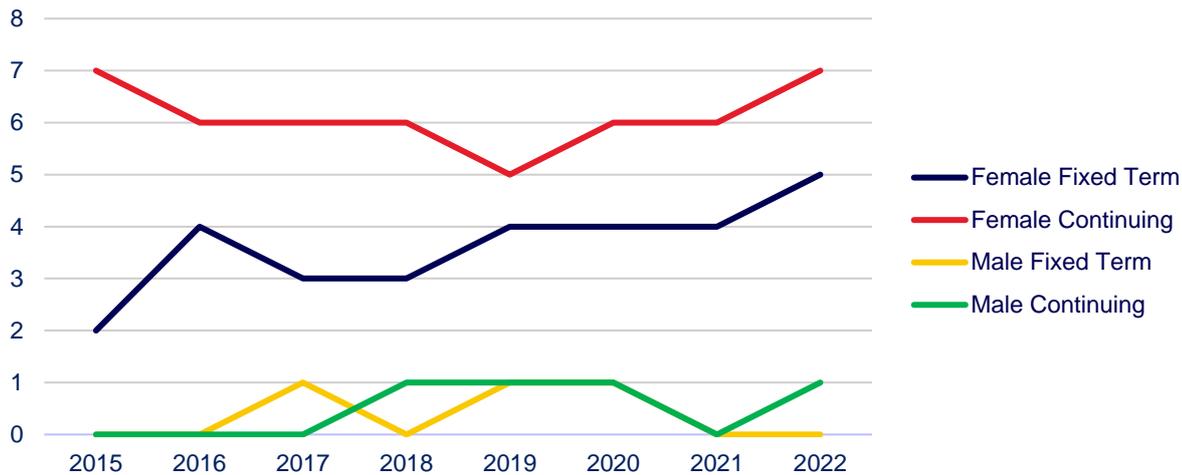
*Figure 16: Percentage utilisation of parental leave by sub-work type across years*

Table 21: Incidences and utilisation rates of Parental Leave by sub-work type between 2015 and 2022

Parental Leave – Fixed Term						
	Incidences of leave		*Headcount*		*% Utilisation*	
Year	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*
2015	8	0	404	518	<6	0
2016	20	<6	453	513	<6	0
2017	15	<6	581	591	<6	<6
2018	19	0	636	553	<6	0
2019	30	<6	688	544	<6	<6
2020	27	<6	714	641	<6	<6
2021	27	<6	720	643	<6	0
2022	44	<6	837	679	<6	0
Parental Leave - Continuing						
	Incidences of leave		*Headcount*		*% Utilisation*	
Year	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*
2015	120	<6	1846	1467	7	0
2016	107	<6	1839	1469	6	0
2017	112	6	1843	1496	6	0
2018	109	11	1957	1598	6	<6
2019	107	10	2068	1653	<6	<6
2020	138	13	2124	1592	6	<6
2021	130	<6	2176	1603	6	0
2022	142	8	2074	1558	7	<6
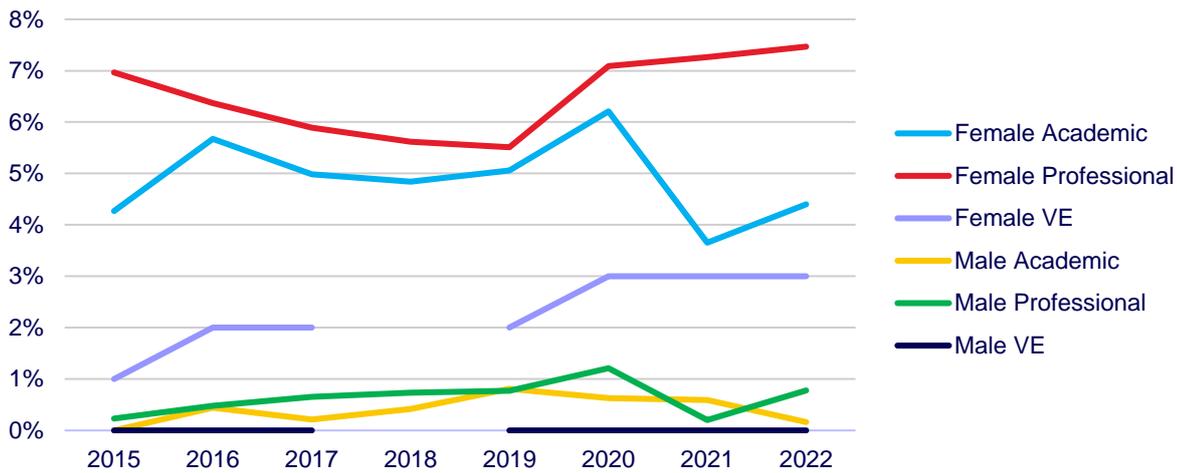
Figure 17: Percentage utilisation of parental leave by job classification across years (note gap in available data for VE)

Table 22: Incidences and utilisation rates of Parental Leave by job classification between 2015 and 2022

Parental Leave – Academic

Year	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	23	0	539	879	<6	0
2016	32	<6	564	903	6	0
2017	32	<6	642	939	<6	0
2018	35	<6	723	961	<6	0
2019	38	8	751	988	<6	<6
2020	47	6	757	950	6	<6
2021	30	6	821	1017	<6	<6
2022	45	<6	1023	1212	<6	0

Parental Leave - Professional

Year	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	103	<6	1478	863	7	0
2016	95	<6	1491	835	6	0
2017	92	6	1561	917	6	<6
2018	92	7	1638	953	6	<6
2019	103	8	1869	1038	6	<6
2020	122	12	1720	991	7	<6
2021	129	<6	1776	989	7	0
2022	141	8	1888	1025	7	<6

Parental Leave - VE

Year	Incidences of leave		Headcount		% Utilisation	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
2015	<6	0	210	239	<6	0
2016	<6	0	221	243	<6	0
2017	<6	<6	206	230	<6	0
2018	<6	<6	NA	168	<6	<6
2019	<6	0	NA	238	<6	0
2020	8	0	NA	235	<6	0
2021	7	0	205	211	<6	0
2022	7	0	217	209	<6	0
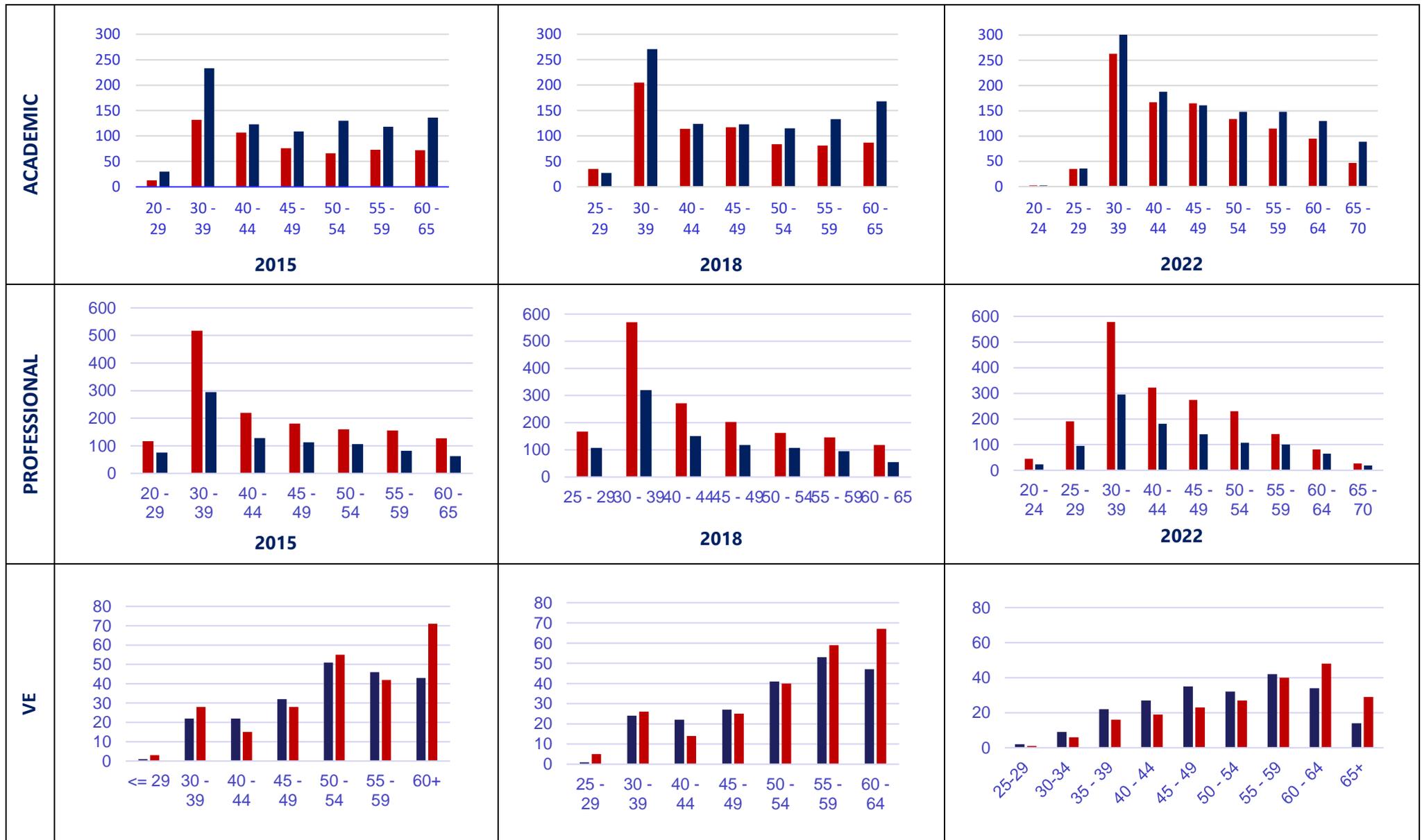
*Figure 18: Age profiles of Academic, Professional and Vocational (VE) Workforces across years (**Female Headcount**: **Male Headcount**)*

Age profile

Differing age profiles may affect Parental Leave utilisation (Figure 18).

Professional staff are the largest, most female-dominated cohort. In 2015-2022, more female Professional staff were in typically child-bearing age-brackets than other cohorts.

Parental Partner Leave is mostly used by male Professional staff, who are generally 30-44 years old; male Academic staff are also generally in this age bracket. Increased use of Parental Partner Leave by Professional staff is likely due to greater career flexibility, whilst male Academic staff may still have concerns about how career breaks will affect their careers.

Career Progression

Desired Outcome(s) – introduction of support programs to aid preparation for and return from a career interruption(s), particularly for research-active academic staff - programs that are impactful, fit-for-purpose and practical.

Implementation of changes to the Academic Promotion system that help capture the breadth and flexibility of academic careers, and thus facilitate more academics, and a more diverse cohort of academics, to apply and to be successful. Also, system changes that enable candidates to present their achievements relative to the opportunities that have been available to them.

WELL PROGRESSED.

Figure 19: RMIT staff member and child at the new QV "Our Place" office

E. Case Study: Career Reignite Program

This Program focuses *on researchers who have experienced career interruption or barriers impacting their ability to access research opportunities.* A program to minimise the adverse impacts of research career interruption was developed through discovery workshops.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Improve access and awareness to entitlements where there is a research career pause
- Identify services and support through Coaching and Research Career Transition Plans
- Provide interventions that are bespoke and flexible to address individual needs, including funding

Implementation:

A staged approach was taken. The program consisting of two main elements:

1. *Research Career Coaching Support (2021 and 2023)*

    A professional coaching service - Career Coaching Panel, to assist eligible Teaching & Research and Research–Only academic staff to develop goals through individual action plans, discussing long-term career goals and development areas (e.g., leadership development, work/life balance, managing uncertainty, communicating for influence). Participants welcomed the opportunity to reflect, articulate and utilise tools and strategies to generate plans to achieve short-medium term career goals (see Impact section).

43 Coaching Program participants
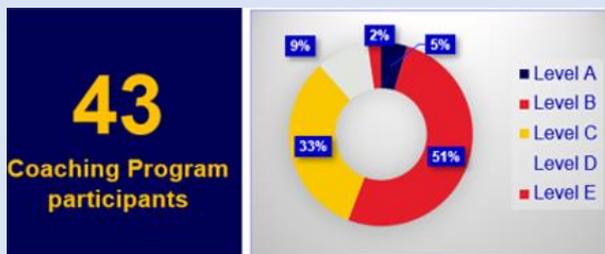
For 2023, rather than seeking nominations, the research community had the opportunity to express interest with line manager support and School Deans. This change ensured line managers were supportive and engaged, strengthening achievability of career plans.

2. *2022-23 Career Reignite Funding Support*

    Career Reignite provided funding at a crucial time in the careers of affected high potential academic staff.

    The guidelines and criteria were co-designed with Colleges and key stakeholders across diversity and inclusion units. It centred around the experience and impact of a career interruption; evidence of high research achievement and potential, (relative to opportunity) and the potential for the funding to produce a positive impact on momentum (or trajectory/direction) of research and career progression.

Outcomes and Impacts:

CAREER REIGNITE FUNDING (2022/23)

- **82 applications received**

- **Funded applications:**
  - **43 applications (38 female; 5 male)**
  - **54% early career researchers; 41% mid-career researchers.**
  - **64% requested support for personnel**
  - **33% requested support for pilot studies and research collaboration**

2022 funding requested support for: Personnel (eg research assistance/relief from other duties) 64%; Pilot studies and collaboration 33%. 2022 cohort progress reports highlighted the impact funding made to progression of research opportunities, including; completion of book manuscripts; open access publications; database establishment; book launches; invitations to collaborate internationally; industry partner discussions; multidisciplinary partner collaborations; patent scoping; preliminary research trials; results leveraging external grants.

Importantly, much of the feedback from successful awardees has stressed that this funding kept their research 'alive and active' and made a significant difference to their ability to progress research (see Impact).

Future Actions:

Embedding outcomes and action plans from coaching in workplans is essential to maximise its benefits. Broadening opportunities available through partnership with academic Colleges and external partners are being explored (ACTION 3a). In 2021, the Program collaborated with the STEM College to support for 2 RMIT VESKI Inspiring Women Career Recovery Grant winners matching cash support. The partnership of R&I Portfolio and STEM College continued in the 2023 round of Career Reignite Funding.

F. Academic Promotion 2018 onwards: Overview

The new promotion framework aims to:

- ensure diversity and inclusion in the academic workforce
- address unequal gender and cultural representations across disciplines.

It introduced:

i)   ARtO in academic promotion (2018)
     Applicants can request their achievements be considered in light of their opportunities

ii) Domain choice (2019)
     Applicants can apply under Engagement & Education, Engagement & Research, or all 3, providing equal access to promotion whatever their career focus. (future Cygnet)

These options address flexibility in promotions and acknowledge career diversity. Applications and success rates have increased since their introduction (Table 23). In 2019, promotion success rate rose significantly (+12%), in most dimensions and for most cohorts.

2022 saw the highest-to-date number (111) of academic promotions; women increasing by 10%, men by 4%. Promotions spanned all HE Colleges, including RMIT Vietnam.

Table 23: Application and success by gender – Academic Promotion 2015-2022

Year	Female		Male		Trans/gender-diverse	
	Applications	Promotion Recommended	Applications	Promotion Recommended	Applications	Promotion Recommended
2015	40	25 (63%)	57	38 (67%)		
2016	35	27 (77%)	61	34 (56%)		
2017	50	36(72%)	53	29 (55%)		
2018	73↑	48 (66%)	108↑	56 (52%)		
2019	43	35 (81%) ↑	80	50 (63%) ↑		
2020	48	35 (73%)	58	39 (67%) ↑	<6	<6 (100%)
2021	59	43 (73%)	88	63 (72%) ↑	<6	<6 (100%)
2022	58	49 (84%) ↑	77	58 (75%) ↑	<6	<6 (100%)

ARtO in Academic Promotion

In 2019-2020, Promotion Committees clearly found it easier to assess cited circumstances if the applicant specifically requested how their ARtO claim should be considered. Applicants could indicate which Research or Education criteria to exclude/modify or request General Consideration.

Along with specific ARtO requests, in 2020, a generic ARtO pandemic lens was applied to all applicants, allowing assessors to consider how COVID-19 affected the applicants' ability to prepare their case.

2019-2021 had similar ARtO activation rates (55%/55%/50%). In 2022, this increased (63%) with an 81% success rate following activation.

The reasons for activating ARtO included: career interruptions, carer responsibilities, the nature of the discipline, and COVID-19 (Figure 20). For 2022, COVID-related ARtO addressed difficulties completing PhDs and disrupted research opportunities, especially due to home-schooling. (ACTION 3d)
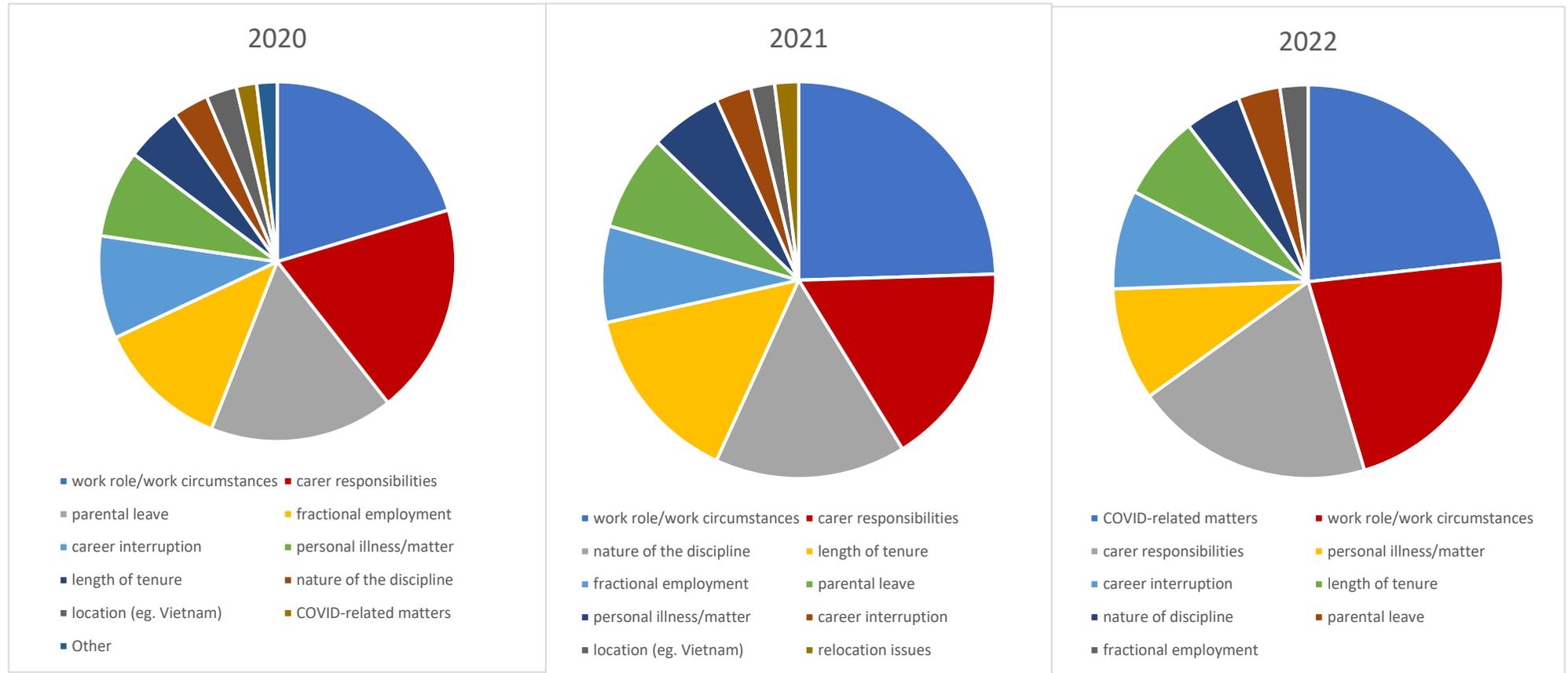
Figure 20: Candidates' reasons for activated ARtO across Academic Promotion Rounds 2020-2022

Parents/Carers and Promotion

From 2021, promotion success rates of staff with and without parent/carer responsibilities have been tracked; and by gender since 2022. In 2022, the success rate was higher for applicants with carer responsibilities (86%) and dependent children (85%) than the overall average (79%).

In 2022, 66% of all applicants identified as having dependents. More female applicants (43%) than male (16%) had carer responsibilities, illustrating the gendered nature of care. Females were slightly more successful than males; all were above the 2022 average and higher than those with no declared responsibilities (Figures 20-23). (ACTION 3d-e)
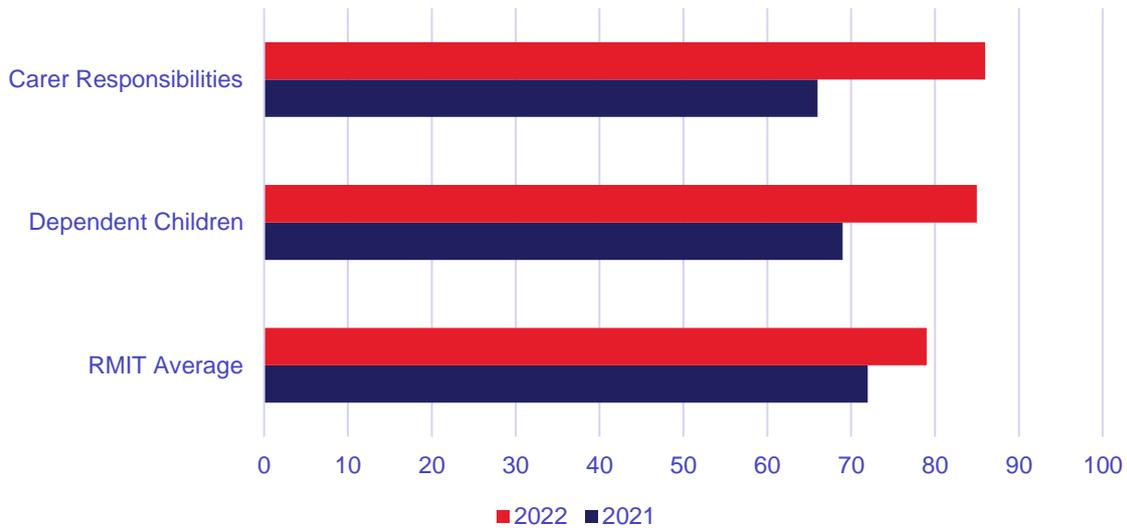
Figure 21: Academic Promotion outcomes (% Success Rate) for parents and carers 2021-2022
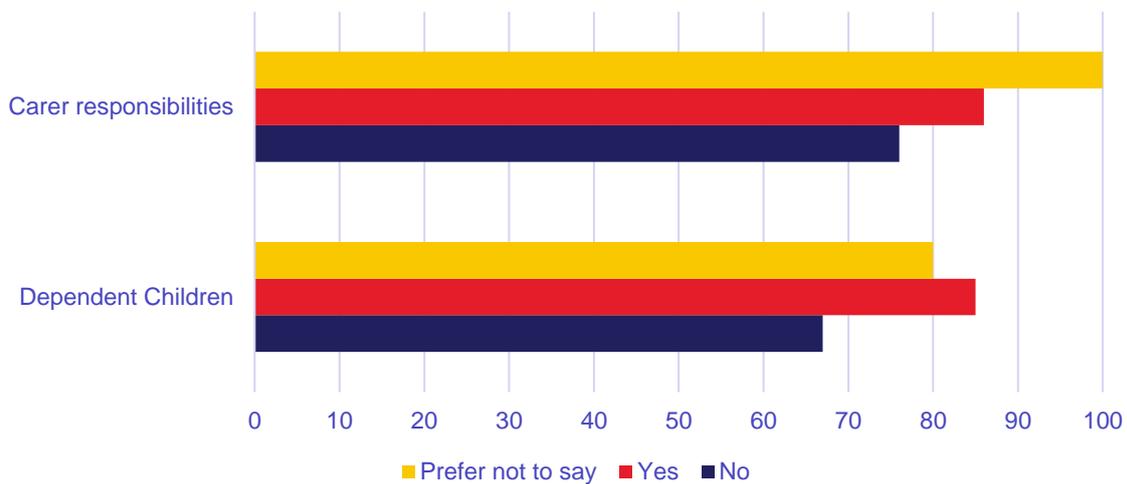
Figure 22: 2022 Academic Promotion outcomes (% Success Rate) for those with and without parent and carer responsibilities

A | 2021

80
70 70
60
50
40 35
30 31
20
10 15
0

Promote   Not Promote | Promote   Not Promote
Dependent children | Carer responsibilities

B | 2022

REDACTED
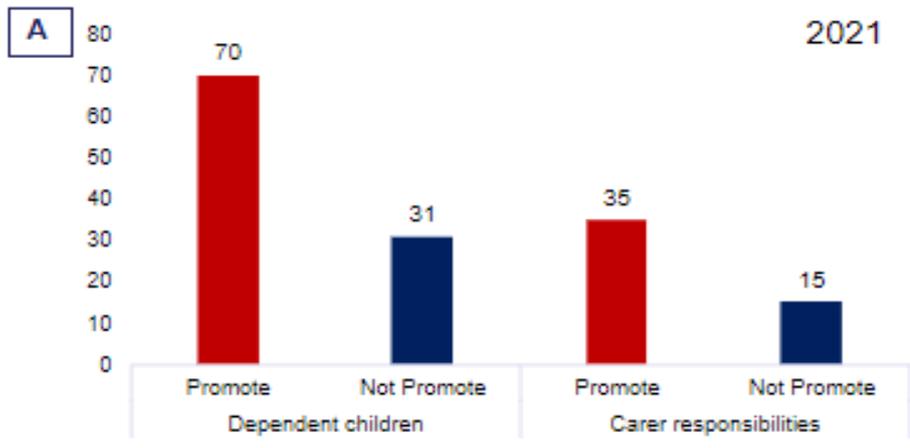
C | 2022

REDACTED

Figure 23: Promotion outcomes for parents/carers (Headcount) a). 2021 dependents and carers; b). 2022 by gender–dependents (REDACTED); c). 2022 by gender–carer responsibilities (REDACTED)

Impact

Impact

Culture of Care

- Staff surveys indicate Professionals are more positive about wellbeing than Academics, VE staff (**Error! Reference source not found.** A, C-D). Similar trends were seen for: Parental Support programs - with greater engagement by Professionals (see Outcomes).

- Staff with caring responsibilities have increased their view over time that their manager genuinely supports equality between genders compared to those without caring responsibilities; for the first time equal at 86% (**Error! Reference source not found.** B). Within VE, staff with caring responsibilities are more positive regarding their manager's care for their wellbeing and, support of equality between genders. This decreased for VE staff without caring responsibilities. (**Error! Reference source not found.** E).

- Staff with a disability's wellbeing and view of supports for equality between genders improved more than staff without a disability (**Error! Reference source not found.** F; G).
  - Continued intersectional analysis (ACTIONS 1c, i, k, m, n, o, 2g)

- Wellbeing leave was mostly well received.

> *"Staff wellbeing week and additional leave days have been greatly appreciated. The stress level and workload implication on staff especially teaching staff have been enormous."*
>
> *"Personally, I felt the wellbeing leave really allowed me to rest and recover from a tough year, and I was grateful for it"*
>
> *"We have received one extra week of wellbeing leave in 2021 and with an expiry date. This is a joke, considering all the extra work due to voluntary redundancies, teaching online, having to work from home and with kids"*
>
> *"In terms of my own identity, this is in the context of living with a chronic physical health condition, mental health issues and trying to balance work and life with a young family. I have been able to succeed in my roles at RMIT through support from the managers in the form of flexible working, open dialogue about what I need and how to balance that with what's required of me, a genuine understanding (or want to understand) my perspective."*

- Parental Support Programs were well received by participants.

> *"Thank you - this was very beneficial as only 5 mins before this seminar, my son told me he has been bullied at school, so it was very important to get this information to help me navigate through this situation and it not affect my work so much. It helps privately and in the workspace too."*
>
> *"Thanks RMIT for offering us the chance to participate in this program. It helps underpin the work I'm doing personally outside of work to overcome our challenges."*
>
> *"Thank you - this was very beneficial as only 5 mins before this seminar, my son told me he has been bullied at school, so it was very important to get this information to help me navigate through this situation and it not affect my work so much. It helps privately and in the workspace too."*
>
> *"Thanks RMIT for offering us the chance to participate in this program. It helps underpin the work I'm doing personally outside of work to overcome our challenges."*

A — 2022: I know how to seek support when concerned about my/others wellbeing

- VE: 78%
- Academic: 79%
- Professional: 89%

■ 2022

B — My immediate supervisor/manager genuinely supports equality between genders

Caring:
- Yes: 2019 81%, 2022 86%
- No: 2019 84%, 2022 86%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

C — My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing

Academic:
- Carers: 2019 74%, 2022 75%
- Non-Carers: 2019 75%, 2022 75%

Professional:
- Carers: 2019 81%, 2022 85%
- Non-Carers: 2019 83%, 2022 87%

VE:
- Carers: 2019 56%, 2022 64%
- Non-Carers: 2019 72%, 2022 67%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

D — My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing

- VE: 2019 66%, 2022 60%
- Academic: 2019 74%, 2022 73%
- Professional: 2019 82%, 2022 85%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

E — My immediate supervisor/manager genuinely supports equality between genders

Academic:
- Carers: 2019 76%, 2022 82%
- Non-Carers: 2019 80%, 2022 83%

Professional:
- Carers: 2019 85%, 2022 88%
- Non-Carers: 2019 86%, 2022 90%

VE:
- Carers: 2019 63%, 2022 70%
- Non-Carers: 2019 79%, 2022 76%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

F — My immediate supervisor/ manager genuinely supports equality between genders

Disability:
- Yes: 2019 75%, 2022 84%
- No: 2019 83%, 2022 87%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

G — My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing

Disability:
- Yes: 2019 70%, 2022 79%
- No: 2019 80%, 2022 82%

■ 2019 ■ 2022

Figure 24: Your Voice 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from across staff cohorts, contract types for those with and without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion of staff who have responded positively.

Table 24: Your Voice 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from across staff cohorts, contract types for those with and without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion of staff who have responded positively. Groups without values are restricted due to privacy.

Question	Year	All RMIT	Caring Yes	Caring No	VE	Acad	Prof	All Caring Y Cont	All Caring Y Fixed Term	All Caring N Cont	All Caring N Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Cont	Academic Caring Y Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Total	Academic Caring N Total	Professional Caring Y Cont	Professional Caring Y Fixed Term	Professional Caring Y Total	Professional Caring N Total	VE Caring Y Cont	VE Caring Y Fixed Term	VE Caring Y Total	VE Caring N Total
I know how to seek support when concerned about my/others wellbeing	2019	Question not available																					
	2022	85%	88%	88%	78%	79%	89%	88%	89%	87%	85%	76%	86%	80%	80%	92%	90%	92%	88%	81%	89%	83%	84%
My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing	2019	79%	78%	80%	66%	74%	82%	77%	79%	78%	84%	72%	89%	74%	75%	81%	77%	81%	83%	54%		56%	72%
	2022	80%	81%	81%	60%	73%	85%	81%	83%	83%	85%	71%	80%	75%	75%	85%	86%	85%	87%	61%	75%	64%	67%
My immediate supervisor/manager genuinely supports equality between genders	2019	83%	81%	84%	72%	78%	85%	81%	82%	83%	88%	75%	86%	76%	80%	86%	83%	85%	86%	62%		63%	79%
	2022	84%	86%	86%	69%	81%	87%	85%	87%	87%	88%	81%	85%	82%	83%	87%	91%	88%	90%	70%	75%	70%	76%

Table 25: Your Voice 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from staff with a Disability and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse staff with or without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion of staff who have responded positively. Groups without values are restricted due to privacy.

Question	Year	All RMIT	Disability Yes	Disability No	Disability Yes Caring Y	Disability Yes Caring N	Disability No Caring Y	Disability No Caring N	CALD Yes	CALD No	CALD Caring Y	CALD Caring N
I know how to seek support when concerned about my/others wellbeing	2019	Question not available										
	2022	85%	83%	88%	83%	83%	89%	86%	87%	88%		
My manager genuinely cares about my wellbeing	2019	79%	70%	80%		73%	78%	80%	80%	80%	77%	81%
	2022	80%	79%	82%	79%	79%	82%	84%	83%	82%		
My immediate supervisor/manager genuinely supports equality between genders	2019	83%	75%	83%		76%	81%	84%	83%	85%	81%	84%
	2022	84%	84%	87%	82%	89%	86%	88%	86%	86%		

Ways of Working and Entitlements

> *"This is **the most flexible environment** I have ever worked in over 30 years. The ability to be able to work flexibly to suit each individual results in increased productivity and loyalty, in my experience."*
>
> *"RMIT has the most flexible work policy of any Victorian University."*
>
> *"I've seen that my other team members have felt quite included because there is **greater accommodation of work schedules, personal commitments, childcare and commitments…**. Really felt like, RMIT cares about some of those other priorities that we have in our life, and I know that's **not the case in every team**."*
>
> *"RMIT's explicit focus on flexibility, their focus on women in STEMM, were a reason for applying."*

From surveys:

- All staff feel more in control, despite no perceived workload changes (**Error! Reference source not found.** C-E).
- Carers feel more able to manage their workload (**Error! Reference source not found.** A-B, F)
- VE score lower than other cohorts (**Error! Reference source not found.** B-E), though considerably higher than in 2019.
    - Investigate more closely (ACTION 2h).
- Fixed-term academics are more satisfied with their flexibility and feel more in control than Continuing staff (**Error! Reference source not found.** F) (ACTION 2g).

- The greatest improvements have been for staff with a disability who definitely feel much more supported - they have the flexibility they need to manage work and other commitments:

2017	2019	2022
45%	66% (+21%)	81% (+15%)

  - Continue to monitor intersectional experiences, particularly CALD, LGBTIQ+ and Disability with Gender (also where possible Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander) (ACTION 2a, g)
  - Continue embedding flex (ACTION 2g).
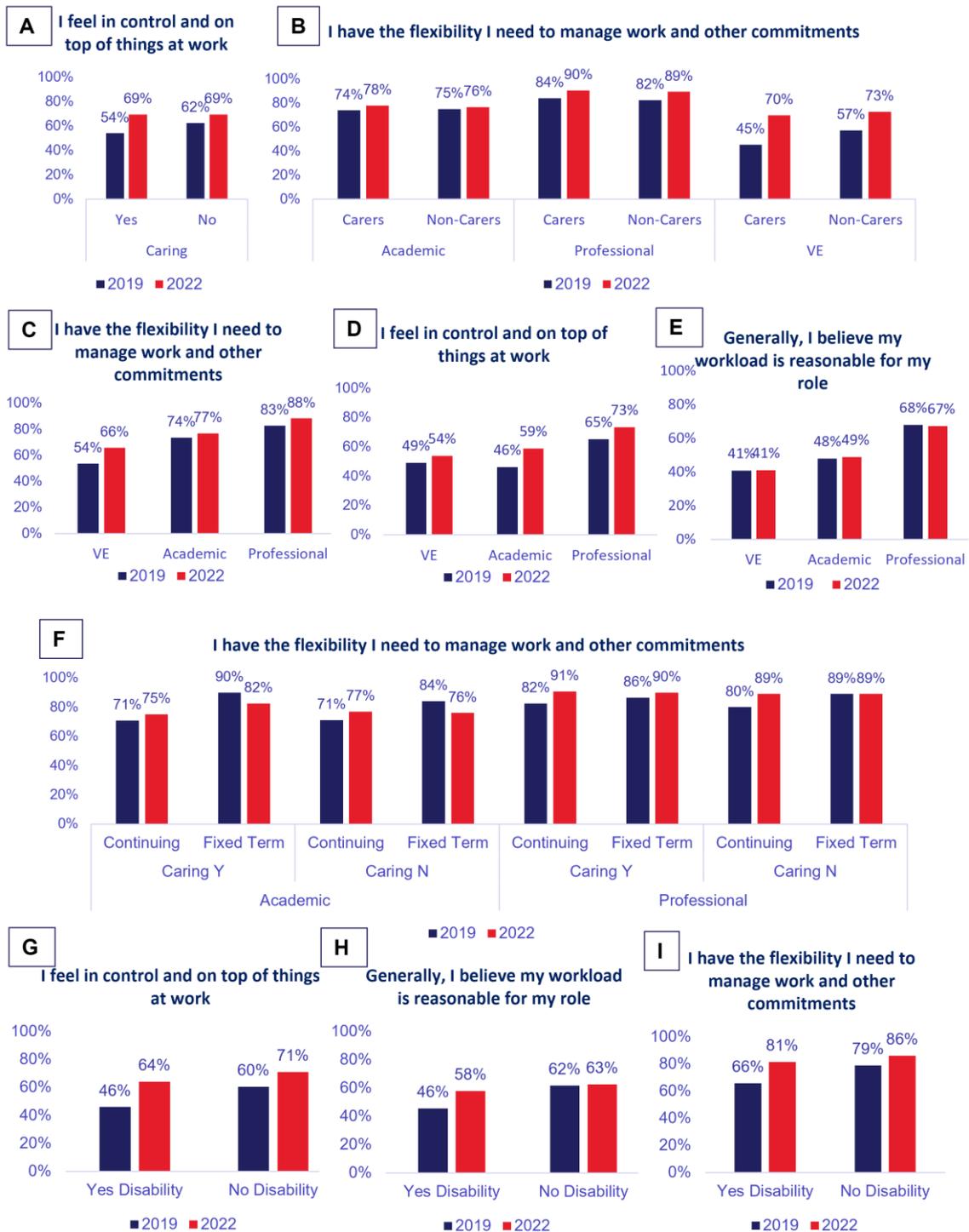
Figure 25: Your Voice 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from across staff cohorts, contract types for those with and without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion of staff who have responded positively.

Table 26: Your Voice 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from across staff cohorts, contract types for those with and without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion of staff who have responded positively. Groups without values are restricted due to privacy.

Question	Year	All RMIT	Caring Yes	Caring No	VE	Acad	Prof	All Caring Y Cont	All Caring Y Fixed Term	All Caring N Cont	All Caring N Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Cont	Academic Caring Y Fixed Term	Academic Caring Y Total	Academic Caring N Cont	Academic Caring N Fixed Term	Academic Caring N Total	Prof Caring Y Cont	Prof Caring Y Fixed Term	Prof Caring Y Total	Prof Caring N Cont	Prof Caring N Fixed Term	Prof Caring N Total	VE Caring Y Cont	VE Caring Y Fixed Term	VE Caring Y Total	VE Caring N Cont	VE Caring N Fixed Term	VE Caring N Total
Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation	2019	Question not available																											
	2022	84%	85%	85%	70%	80%	87%	85%	87%	83%	88%	77%	84%	80%	78%	83%	81%	88%	90%	89%	85%	91%	87%	70%	82%	73%	76%	68%	74%
I am satisfied with my hybrid working arrangement and other post-COVID ways of working	2019	Question not available																											
	2022	85%	87%	87%	72%	81%	88%	87%	87%	85%	87%	80%	85%	82%	79%	81%	80%	90%	89%	90%	88%	90%	89%	71%	81%	74%	69%	84%	75%
I have the flexibility I need to manage work and other commitments	2019	78%	78%	78%	54%	74%	83%	76%	84%	75%	85%	71%	90%	74%	71%	84%	75%	82%	86%	84%	80%	89%	82%	39%		45%			57%
	2022	84%	86%	86%	66%	77%	88%	86%	86%	86%	84%	75%	82%	78%	77%	76%	76%	91%	90%	90%	89%	89%	89%	70%	71%	70%	69%	79%	73%
	% diff	6%	8%	7%	12%	3%	6%	10%	2%	11%	-1%	4%	-8%	4%	6%	12%	2%	8%	3%	7%	9%	0%	7%	31%		25%			16%
Generally, I believe my workload is reasonable for my role	2019	61%	58%	63%	41%	48%	68%	54%	65%	59%	68%	40%	62%	44%	43%	64%	51%	63%	69%	66%	66%	74%	69%	33%		39%			42%
	2022	61%	61%	61%	41%	49%	67%	59%	65%	63%	67%	42%	66%	52%	39%	55%	47%	66%	68%	66%	70%	74%	71%	43%	25%	36%	47%	47%	47%
I feel in control and on top of things at work	2019	59%	54%	62%	49%	46%	65%	50%	59%	58%	67%	40%	56%	43%	41%	58%	49%	54%	59%	59%	65%	72%	68%	33%		42%			53%
	2022	68%	69%	69%	54%	59%	73%	68%	73%	70%	73%	53%	69%	59%	52%	69%	61%	74%	78%	75%	74%	77%	75%	54%	54%	53%	69%	53%	64%
	% diff	9%	15%	7%	5%	13%	8%	18%	15%	12%	6%	13%	14%	16%	11%	11%	12%	19%	20%	16%	9%	5%	7%	21%		11%			11%

Table 27: 2019 and 2022 staff survey responses from staff with a Disability and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse staff with or without caring responsibilities. Percentages are representative of the proportion who have responded positively. Groups without values are restricted due to privacy.

Question	Year	All RMIT	Disability Yes	Disability No	Disability Yes Caring Y	Disability Yes Caring N	Disability No Caring Y	Disability No Caring N	CALD Yes	CALD No	CALD Caring Y	CALD Caring N
Using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success in my organisation	2019	Question not available										
	2022	84%	78%	86%	78%	80%	87%	85%	88%	83%		
I am satisfied with my hybrid working arrangement and other post-COVID ways of working	2019	Question not available										
	2022	85%	82%	87%	82%	84%	88%	86%	88%	85%		
I have the flexibility I need to manage work and other commitments	2019	78%	66%	79%		68%	79%	79%	80%	78%	78%	82%
	2022	84%	81%	86%	83%	83%	87%	86%	87%	85%		
	% difference	+6%	+15%	+7%		+15%	+8%	+7%	+7%	+7%		
Generally, I believe my workload is reasonable for my role	2019	61%	46%	62%		45%	59%	63%	64%	60%	60%	66%
	2022	61%	58%	63%	60%	59%	61%	65%	65%	59%		
	% difference	0	12%	1%		14%	2%	2%	1%	-1%		
I feel in control and on top of things at work	2019	59%	46%	60%		50%	55%	63%	67%	56%	62%	69%
	2022	68%	64%	71%	65%	67%	71%	72%	73%	66%		
	% difference	9%	20%	11%		17%	16%	9%	6%	10%		

Career Progression

Most staff, except VE staff, now feel positive that ***using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success*** (Table 26 and Table 27). Continuing Staff were slightly less positive (83-85%) in their response than Fixed-Term (87-88%), though still very favourable, with very little difference in response of Caring Y vs N (1-3% across staff cohorts).

VE staff were consistently lower in their response, by contract and Caring Y/N, than the rest of the University - (VE - All (70%); Caring Y/N (73-74%); Cont. Caring Y/N (70-76%), except those on Fixed-Term contracts where there was a large gap (14%) in perception for Caring Y (82%) and Caring N (68%).

   o   Considerable Work needed to understand/support VE needs (ACTION 2i, 3g).

However, even though there is still work to be done to understand and support the needs of particular cohorts, on comparison with the response to **'*I can advance my career while using flexible work*'** (47% for all RMIT) in the 2017 Gender Equality Survey (Table 5 – Evidence) – a similar question to that above in 2022, it is clear that progress has been made - new entitlements, flexible work practices, and ARtO in promotion have made a difference.

Academic Promotion

Evidence from – 'Conversations about Academic Promotion: WRN event', March 17, 2023

Re ARtO – Successful candidate 2022 round:

"Ah yes, I actually wrote an ARtO statement, and I did disclose my personal circumstances - I had an X challenge during this period of time, I had to take time off work. I sent it [my application with the statement] to different friends and colleagues for review. Some people did (comment on this) - one of my colleagues actually crossed it out when they gave me feedback and said that it's probably better not to mention it.

But regardless, I decided to leave it in and to make my case very strongly …. to say it's OK to disclose, everyone has to go through these challenges sometimes, it's a very natural part of being human. So, I put it out very confidently and made it harder for them (reviewers) to use as an excuse. I want to share that experience and tell people don't feel afraid to disclose.

I think RMIT actually truly values diversity and inclusion in many ways, so people shouldn't feel afraid."

Ability to cultivate a portfolio for the Engagement criterion of Promotion:

"Care for my parents and other children in my family (not my own but my niece/nephew), also enables me to participate much more in engagement activities (media, gov consultation, industry partnerships)… It's been an extremely important way to better manage my time overall and feel a lot more fulfilled in my career."

Career Interruption Supports

Case Study 2: Career Re-Ignite

Dr Thilini Thrimawithana is a senior lecturer and academic in the School of Health and Biomedical Sciences, specifically the Discipline of Pharmacy. Thilini is a participant in the Career Re-ignite program.

Dr Thilini Thrimawithana felt the Career Reignite coaching program empowered her to achieve her research goals.

Dr Thilini Thrimawithana, participant of Career Re-Ignite

"Career breaks impacted my research momentum… prior to going on my second maternity leave, I had a grant that was further affected during 2020."

"I really enjoyed the coaching experience; it was the first time I'd ever had a career coach, and it really helped me with my career goals and empowered me to achieve them. The activity helped to identify what was stopping me from reaching the goals I wanted to achieve, and it helped me create an action plan to combat these barriers."

"I used the funds to get more coaching sessions, because I really did find having the external coach useful and empowering when re-embarking on my research journey."

"Hopefully this year I'll be able to use the pilot data to improve my grant applications, and a couple of papers are already in progress due to the pilot studies my team and I set up with help from the Career Reignite funding support."

"The funding had a significant impact for me, enabling me to extend a contract for a post-doctoral researcher who was working with me in order for us to achieve our book publishing deadline." Associate Professor Grace McQuilten, Art.

"2020 and 2021 was a real hit to my trajectory and the momentum I had been building since joining RMIT as a Vice Chancellor Research Fellow. The funding enabled me to bring on a former Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program student, Jessica Fong, as a casual research assistant in 2022. All of a sudden, I just had time, and a bit of help and support, which was really what I needed to achieve my goals for last year, and going into 2023, the research group is more organised and ready to go."

"I know how much this support can mean to people, and many different ways this program can be used to restart people's research momentum." Dr Amy Gelmi – Science, Chemistry

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Future
Action Plan

Future Action Plan

Reference	Rationale/ Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcomes/ Targets/ Success Indicators
1. Culture of Care	• Staff survey has allowed key insights into experience and wellbeing with differences between staff cohorts: significant improvements for all, especially staff with a disability and those with caring responsibilities. • Staff with caring responsibilities have increased their view over time that their manager genuinely supports equality between genders compared to those without caring responsibilities. • Parental Support Programs were well received by participants. • Differing uptake of Parental and Carer support programs by staff cohorts. • Wellbeing Leave was mostly well received. • Positive uptake and experience of staff taking Wellbeing Leave, though differences in leave uptake between staff cohorts. • Professional staff are more positive about their wellbeing than other cohorts.	a) Continue Slowdown weeks in the annual University calendar.	2022 -	University Communications	CPO	Wellbeing staff experience questions. Annual Leave Utilisation during slowdown weeks. Tailored staff survey questions re utilisation and staff satisfaction by gender and cohort.
		b) Communication of EAP '*Converge*' Campaign – new provider, greater focus on carer and eldercare support and social services.	Q2 2024	University Communications	CPO	Collateral created and roll-out. Measures of website site clicks. Feedback from Converge on requests and utilisation.
		c) Continued communication campaigns featuring the diversity of parents and carers at RMIT, and with diverse caring responsibilities and journeys. Intersectional focus/coupled with carer-specific resources and supports. Celebrate 'Carers' Week'.	Q2 2024 -	University Communications Culture and Inclusion	CPO	Output: Profiles and campaigns, Carer-specific resources and supports. Staff experience results on wellbeing.

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		d) i) Review the end-to-end experience of those who have taken long-term leave (6 months+) including first 12 months post return and any exit surveys. ii) Conduct staff experience pulse checks at critical moments, including on return (re-induction to role and position after extended break).	i) Q2/Q3 2024 ii) Q2 2024 -	Culture & Inclusion, Staff Experience	CPO	Greater understanding of staff experience pre, during and post long-term leave. Targeted future measures of success identified and implemented. Staff experience of parental support programs.
		e) Continued implementation and internal awareness campaign for transition to and from Parental Leave or any long-term leave-related carer responsibility, illness, injury, secondment. Focus on Academic and VE staff participation, including more accessible modes of delivery for these cohorts.	Q2 2024 -	University Communications Culture & Inclusion	CPO	Greater utilisation of parental support programs by Academics and VE teaching staff due to identifying and implementing more accessible modes of delivery for these cohorts.

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		f) Implement feedback process as part of transition to and from Parental Leave programs, allowing measurement of impact.	Q3 2024 -	Learning & Development	CPO	Design and implement feedback process. Ongoing review and response.
		g) Pilot a staff peer-support program to enhance belonging and normalise the lived-experience of mental health issues.	Q3 2024 -	Mental Health & Wellbeing	CPO, Director - Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Pilot complete. Knowledge gathered on impact on the lived-experience and wellbeing of participants with diverse profiles. Greater staff experience survey results around wellbeing.
		h) Continue to support and monitor cases of family violence reported to RMIT Safer Community.	2022 -	GBV Prevention	COO, CPO, Director - Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Continued prioritisation and monitoring.
		i) Clearly align staff survey responses and intersectional demographic options to allow for consistent reporting across time.	Q3/4 2023 -	Culture & Inclusion	CPO	Greater intersectional and longitudinal insights.
		j) Conduct a review of RMIT Childcare facilities, resources and supports (currently under-utilised), to establish requirements post pandemic.	Q2-Q4 2024	Campus Planning and Services	COO, CPO	Review complete with insights from those with lived experience. Insights inform future strategy.

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		k) Review childcare resourcing and other supports for international staff and students who don't have access to domestic subsidies.	Q2-Q4 2024	Global Mobility Manager Campus Planning and Services	COO, CPO	Review complete with insights from those with lived experience. Insights inform future strategy. Staff experience for international families.
		l) Led from senior levels, implement core hours guidelines to ensure that required key strategic, fora and townhall meetings, committee meetings and governance, are outside of school drop-off and pick-up times where possible.	Q3-Q4 2024	Leadership meetings: Secretariat Governance, legal and strategic operations GMCOs and DVCs	COO, CPO	Understanding of the format most suited to those with diverse caring responsibilities across areas and role types. Understand the intersection of *in-person, hybrid* and *virtual* work requirements and diverse caring responsibilities of staff. Implementation of review outcomes. Annual monitoring by informal check-ins and staff survey.
	Multiple dimensions of care (intersectionality and gendered expectations) • Further emphasis required on the breadth and depth of 'care'. • Greater intersectional perspective needed for all equity interventions and data analysis and insights.	m) Review Parent and Carer policy and resources for continued inclusive language supports e.g., Partner Leave, including exploration of the depth of care types e.g., long-term career breaks, ongoing care, and short-term care; and the nature of caring responsibilities.	Phase 1 - Q4 2023; Phase 2 2024	Policy & Workplace Relations	CPO	Review recommendations implemented. Greater understanding of types of care.

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	• Drive awareness of intersectionality to better support gender diversity and inclusion.	n) Ways of Wellbeing Framework revised to include Indigenous perspectives and to promote care of community and family.	Q2-Q4 2024	Mental Health & Wellbeing	CPO, Director - Health, Safety and Wellbeing	Framework revised. Staff wellbeing monitored.
		o) Ensure that the breadth and depth of caring responsibilities and obligations of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community - including e.g., foster carer, family, parent, and community care, are captured, and supported.	Q3 2023 - Q2 2024	Policy & Workforce Relations, Principal Advisor, Indigenous Workforce Development - Culture & Inclusion	CPO Exec Director - Talent & OD	Breadth and depth of carer responsibilities and necessary supports captured, enacted, and regularly reviewed.
2. Ways of working and entitlements	Carer's Leave • Lower utilisation of Carer's Leave since 2020: lower % utilisation rates for Fixed-Term staff vs Continuing, and for Academic and VE staff. • Carers feel more able to manage their workload Parental Leave • Lower % utilisation rates of Parental Leave for Fixed-Term staff vs Continuing, and for VE and Academic staff vs Professionals.	**Entitlements** a) Continued review of utilisation by all staff, including Fixed-Term employment impacts on Parent and Carer Leave/entitlement utilisation and talent retention. Evaluate entitlement changes for staff experience and against sector benchmarks.	Q3 2024 - Q2 2025	Culture & Inclusion	CPO	Review complete and implemented. Desired outcome: greater number of fixed-term staff accessing Parental, Parental Partner, and Carer's Leave with positive impacts on retention. Continued understanding of the experience of staff taking Carer's Leave including an appreciation of the use of Carer's Leave in relation to flexible working.
		b) External promotion of Parental Leave entitlements for our EVP in recruitment and for newly commenced staff.	Q4 2023 -	EVP / Recruitment, Manager - Employee Branding	CPO	Collateral developed and rolled out.

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						Positive impacts on recruitment of women in under-represented areas - more new women and diverse talent consider RMIT an attractive workplace.
		c) Improve internal communications of entitlements for easy interpretation and access in times of need including exploration of automated communications when staff lodge certain system requests.	Q4 2023 -	Staff experience Culture & Inclusion	CPO	Collateral developed and rolled out. Better staff experience around balance of work and life at times of higher stress or uncertainty (taking long career breaks for parenting and/or caring).
		d) Review *Return-to-Work (RtW) Bonus* and *Keep-in-Touch* options for staff across all cohorts- to maximise support and incentive for career return, including: i) School-based initiatives, incentives and supports on top of *RtW.* ii) Institutional-wide supports - Return to Work – including line manager's awareness and support mechanisms.	Q2 - Q4 2024	Policy & Workplace Relations, Culture & Inclusion, School Deans, GMCOs	CPO, College DVCs	Greater awareness and understanding of options for staff returning from leave and managers.

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		e) Explore opportunities and promote access to support and flexibility for prenatal, IVF and fertility treatment.	Q3 2024 - Q2 2025	Policy & Workplace Relations	CPO	Review of current best practice in sector and beyond, coupled with key stakeholder input, completed and recommendations implemented.
		f) Continue to review any additional supports for the range of different caring responsibilities people have from small children to elderly relatives, to family support of people with a disability etc.	Q3 2024 -	Culture and Inclusion	CPO	Comprehensive understanding of types of care and pressures for staff.
	• Increased flexible working has led to improved staff experience of managing work and other responsibilities in 2022 compared to 2017. • Flex as a strength of RMIT in the tertiary sector. • Staff with a disability had the greatest improvements in experience relating to flexible working. • VE staff experience on flexible work has increased since 2017 but is lower than other cohorts	**Flexible working** g) Continue to mature formal and informal flexible working options. Review gendered and intersectional employee flex experience and utilisation including those with different contract types, and varied parent and caring responsibilities e.g. children, elder-care, and dependents with a disability or experiencing an intense period of illness.	Q4 2023 -	Policy & Workplace Relations	CPO	Constant evolution due to staff and environmental monitoring.

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		h) Explore with VE staff any additional opportunities, strategies, to optimise the balance of life and work responsibilities that are compatible with the requirements of VE teaching and learning delivery.	Q1 - Q3 2024	Organisation Development (OD), Culture & Inclusion, VE Teachers and Senior Educators, CoVE leadership	CPO, DVC CoVE	Review of current best practice in sector, coupled with key stakeholder input, completed and recommendations implemented.
3. Career progression	• Successful pilot program of the Career Reignite program of career coaching and funding support. • Successful awardees have stressed that this funding kept their research 'alive and active' and made a significant difference to their ability to progress research.	**Career Re-ignite** a) Explore opportunities to broaden impact through partnership approaches with Colleges cf. current expansion in STEM College.	start for 2024 round, end of 2024	Research and Innovation Capability, R&I Portfolio	DVC R&I	More participants in the Career Re-Ignite program thanks to diversified funding sources.
		b) Ongoing review of the Career Re-ignite program following phased implementation.	2 cohorts by 2024. Mid 2024 to start and first review by early 2025	Research and Innovation Capability, R&I Portfolio	DVC R&I	Continued awareness of the impact and opportunities for continuing and strengthening the program.
		c) Line manager education and awareness for active involvement in participant's coaching and continued support throughout the participant's agreed action plan.	start Q4 2023, end of 2025	Research and Innovation Capability, R&I Portfolio	DVC R&I	Embedding the program in people management processes. Ongoing positive impacts for participants longitudinally.

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	• Academic staff experience around the supports given to achieve research goals and teaching goals has declined. • Uptake and understanding of ARtO has matured: Promotion Committees clearly now find it easier to assess ARtO claims; rates of ARtO activation have increased, though messaging to community on when and how to use ARtO still needs finessing. • Promotion success rate was higher for applicants with carer responsibilities and dependent children than the overall average in 2022.	**Career Progression** d) i) Continued use and refinement of Achievement Relative to Opportunity in Academic Promotions and Recruitment, with annual review. ii) Develop, in consultation with the community, Context Guidelines for panels re the cultural contribution and broader obligations of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander people, to be considered alongside their applications, cf. Guidelines for RMIT Vietnam Academics, and the range of Discipline Context Statements, already in place.	2023 -	Capability and Careers	CPO, DVC Education	i) Continued strong uptake and success rates for participants using ARtO in Academic Promotion. ii) Greater contextual guidance to panels and key decision-makers in the promotions process, and hence more considered and sustained outcomes for all cohorts and campuses.
		e) Continued monitoring of Academic Promotion applicant cohort and successful staff across intersectional metrics – gender+, parents and carers, and varying contracts etc., together with timely and fit-for-purpose interventions where gaps present. For example, continue English language editing supports for CALD applicants.	2023 -	Capability and Careers	CPO, DVC Education	Richer data that informs an evolving system of fit-for-purpose actions. Reviewed annually. Sustained success rates for diverse cohorts.

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		f) As part of the workload management review, understand the different approaches/areas across the University and how they impact gender equality, e.g., extra research and reduced teaching workload allocation during their first 2 years (up to 12 months after career break).	2023 -	Workload Allocation Model Project, OD Team, College Deans	CPO College DVCs	Recommendations for parents and carers across different areas and role types.

Increased staff experience for Continuing Academics. |
| | Most staff, now feel positive that using flexible work arrangements is not a barrier to success.

However, VE staff were consistently lower in their response to staff survey questions on Career Progression. | g) Review VE staff career progression opportunities and supports. | Q1 - Q3 2024 | Capability and Careers, CoVE Executive team | CPO, DVC CoVE | Review of current best practice in sector, coupled with key stakeholder input, completed and recommendations implemented. |