2025

Women in tech:

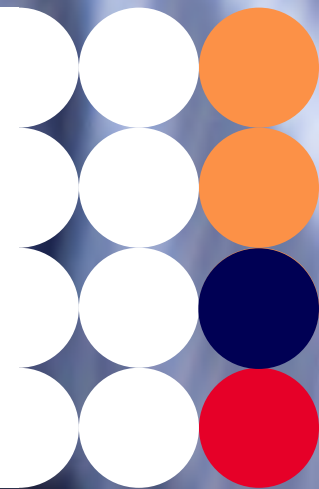## How skills and talent diversity drive business success

RMIT Online

→ What's the biggest single opportunity to close Australia's digital skills gap?

= Women.

Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exponential technological transformation is changing the way we work. The explosion of Generative and Agentic AI and other technological innovations has made workers more productive, businesses more innovative, and fundamentally shifted how we learn, work, and play.

The workforce needs new skills to capitalise on the opportunities that arise from big technology shifts. Australia has a growing need for both a core workforce of technology professionals and a wider workforce fluent in new digital skills. **In today's age, digital and business fluency are synonymous.**

Australia has a shortage of workers with up-to-date digital skills. More than a third of businesses surveyed for this report say they lack or have outdated Generative AI and digital transformation skills. In addition, **1.3 million technology workers are needed in Australia by 2030,[1] yet the current government target for tech workers by 2030 is just 1.2 million.**[2] That's a difference of more than 100,000 workers, equivalent to 10% of the current technology workforce.

What's the biggest single opportunity to close the digital skills gap? It's women.

Currently, just 30% of the Australian technology workforce are women, compared with 44% of the professional workforce more broadly. Attracting more women into technology roles would not only improve the diversity of the sector but importantly help to solve Australia's technology skills crisis. This is good for women, good for business, and good for Australia's economy more broadly.

This report provides a fresh look into how women may be the solution to Australia's digital skills challenge. It explores what businesses are currently doing to improve diversity in technology, what more could be done, and quantifies the benefits to businesses, and to women, from reskilling into technology roles.

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+ 1.3 million tech workers are needed by 2030.[1]

— Yet the government's target is only 1.2 million.[2]

That's a difference of more than 100k workers.

1 Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
2 Albanese, A. (2022), 'Labor Targets 1.2 Million Tech Jobs by 2030' [media release], <https://anthonyalbanese.com.au/media-centre/labor-targets-1-2-million-tech-jobs-by-2030-husic>

PROGRESS AND SETBACKS

There are a plethora of factors driving Australia's sustained gendered occupational distribution and poor gender diversity in the technology professions, with research pointing to the role of pervasive gender norms, lack of clarity in skilling pathways, poor workplace culture, and the role of bias and discrimination.

Businesses recognise the need to improve gender diversity in technology – three-quarters are aware that it is an issue while 44% are doing something about it. 76% of surveyed businesses have either already implemented reskilling and upskilling opportunities or are planning to implement them in the future. Over time, the share of women in the technology workforce has grown from 28% to 30% since 2015, while the number of technology workers has grown from 600,000 to more than one million workers in 2024. Businesses are adopting new technologies at an impressive rate, with other research suggesting that 84% of Australian businesses are actively implementing new technology.[3]

For those businesses addressing the diversity of their technology workforce, the benefits are clear. More than half have experienced **improved team dynamics and performance**, and/or improved **creativity and innovation**. This is aligned with broader research which indicates that greater gender diversity, particularly in executive teams within an organisation, translates to higher profitability and risk adjusted returns.

While these are promising signs of progress, businesses continue to face roadblocks to tackling this issue. For example, one in five surveyed businesses claim that it is not a problem. A further one-third say tackling the problem is not a priority or are **unsure how to best address it**, suggesting that businesses are seeking more tangible information about how best to fill skills gaps within their organisation.

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THE OPPORTUNITY

Attracting more women into Australia's technology sector would help to solve Australia's digital skills needs and would have tangible benefits for individuals, businesses and the broader economy.

This report draws on skills similarity data across over 350 occupations to understand how they align to skills needed in core technology roles. There are 661,300 women with a 'short-term skilling pathway' into technology. This means that they could reskill into technology through a short course or on-the-job training, within approximately six months.

This report presents new economic modelling of the expected benefits of improving the gender gap in the share of women employed in technology, increasing from 30% to 39%. This would see 137,300 additional women joining the technology workforce, helping to enable Australia to reach the 1.3 million technology workers needed by 2030.

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3   AI Group (2024), Technology Adoption in Australian Industry, <https://www.aigroup.com.au/globalassets/news/reports/2024/research-and-economics/ai_group_technology_adoption_in_australian_industry_2024.pdf>

The incentive for this transition is clear. Technology roles typically pay more than the average non-technology professional role and women will likely be drawn to a career with greater earnings potential.

> ✳ This report estimates women reskilling into technology could earn $600 more per week and $31,100 more per year, **which represents an 31% average wage boost.**

It's possible that women do not realise this benefit immediately upon reskilling into a technology role, but that this is earned over time as women gain more experience in the sector.

Reskilling into technology doesn't just benefit women; businesses are positioned to gain significantly by being able to attract more skilled labour. To measure this, Deloitte Access Economics used data for what businesses pay tech workers compared to the occupations women could reskill from, along with the additional profits generated by these workers.

On average, businesses pay $31,000 more per year for tech workers. These workers generate additional profits of $16,400 each on average, relative to the occupations they reskilled from. This wage premium, as well as the additional profits generated for the business, reflects the average value reskilled workers add to businesses.

Bridging the forecast skills gap is commercially vital – it represents a $6.5 billion dividend for Australian medium and large businesses due to the additional technology talent that could be accessed through programs focused on reskilling women into technology careers. This benefit is equivalent to $278,700 per medium business and $1.8 million per large business on average, across the 10,300 medium and large businesses looking for technology talent in Australia.[4,5]

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4   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2022), Characteristics of Australian Businesses, 2021-22, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/technology-and-innovation/characteristics-australian-business/2021-22>
5   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Counts of Australian Businesses, 2020-2024, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release>

Businesses gain a collective business benefit of $6.5 billion

Each reskilling woman gains an average annual wage benefit of $31,100

WHAT'S NEXT?

Clearly, there's an enormous opportunity associated with reskilling women into technology roles, as a way to build the stock of digital workers in Australia. This bold ambition has been identified before, and efforts have been made by businesses, industry bodies and governments.

Over half of surveyed businesses believe fair and inclusive hiring processes have the largest impact on improving gender diversity, with offering reskilling and upskilling opportunities also ranked as highly effective.

However, research implies that while organisations are prioritising hiring more women, many are neglecting to focus on retaining and promoting women in technology internally. Research suggests that more than 50% of women who join the technology industry are likely to quit before the age of 35.[1]

The majority of surveyed businesses reported insufficient internal opportunities (e.g. lack of reskilling/ upskilling opportunities, unclear paths for promotion or career progression) as the primary challenge faced when attempting to retain women in technology roles.

In the short-term, businesses could identify their own cohort of potential short-term reskillers. Businesses could approach this cohort to understand their appetite to reskill into technology roles, while providing women time off to retrain, facilitate access to retraining materials, and guaranteeing a role in technology in six months' time.

This is not just the responsibility of businesses; industry and governments also have a role to play. While the technology sector and Australian State and Federal Governments already have some initiatives in place, programs which build skills throughout an individual's lifetime, ensuring the accessibility of skilling programs to meet the needs of diverse groups, and pairing skilling programs with opportunities for mentoring/ networking are just some of the activities which would help to accelerate progress.

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1 World Economic Forum (2023), 'Here's why women are leaving the tech industry - and what can be done about it' <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/03/women-are-leaving-tech-roles-heres-how-we-can-support-them-to-improve-retention>

Defining the skilling challenge for women in tech

The technology industry is experiencing a shortage of skills, yet women remain significantly underrepresented. There is an imperative for Australia to take action and tapping into an underutilised pool of talent could be a solution.

THE IMPERATIVE	THE OPPORTUNITY	THE SOLUTION

44% ↓ **30%**
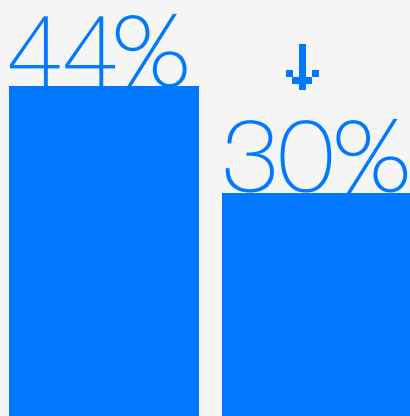
While women make up 44% of the overall professional workforce,

they account for only 30% of the technology workforce.

Women with a short-term reskilling pathway into technology **would earn**

+$31k

more per year.

Having access to more skilled workers would **generate a**

6.5 billion

dividend for medium and large Australian businesses.

→ A **fair and inclusive hiring process** was the most impactful action recommended by businesses.

→ **Reskilling and upskilling opportunities** were rated highly impactful by businesses.

→ Businesses can identify their own **cohort of short-term reskillers** and guarantee them a technology role on completion of retraining.
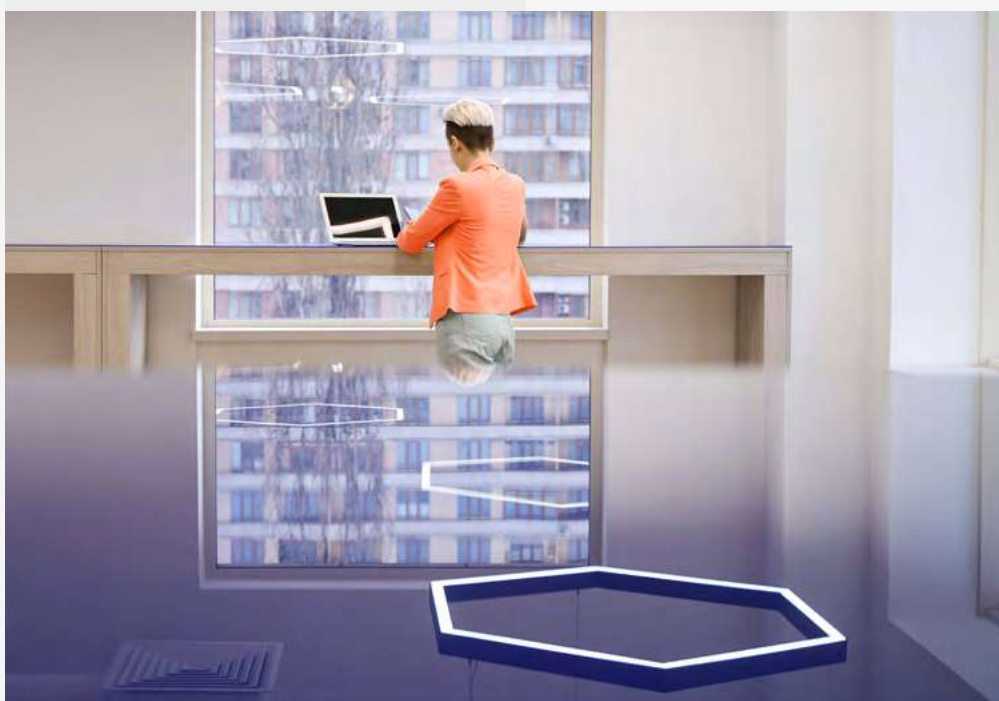
Australia needs

1.3 million

technology workers by 2030 to meet industry demand,[1] but the current government target for tech workers by 2030 is only 1.2 million.[2]

1   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
2   Albanese, A. (2022), 'Labor Targets 1.2 Million Tech Jobs by 2030' [media release], <https://anthonyalbanese.com.au/media-centre/labor-targets-1-2-million-tech-jobs-by-2030-husic>
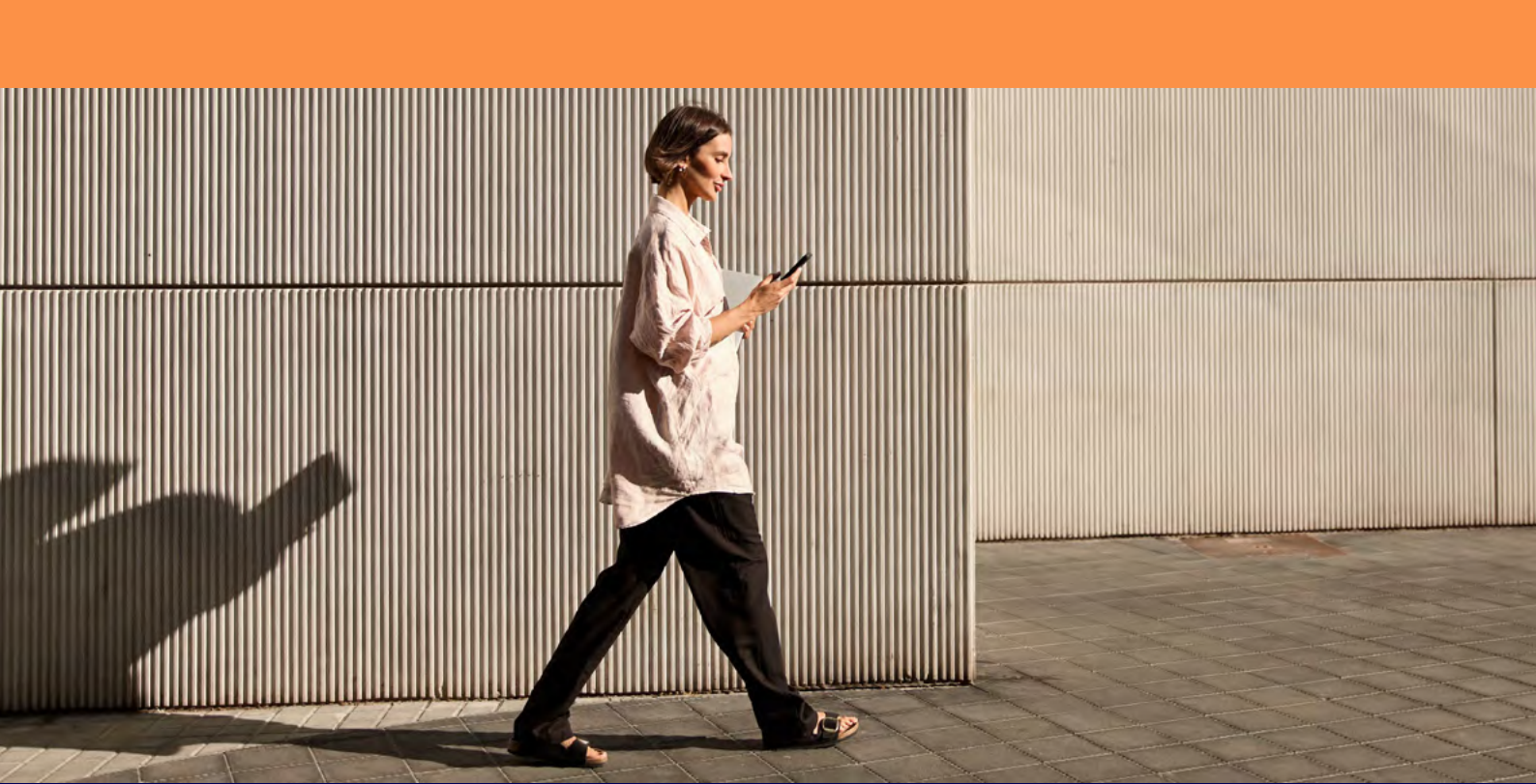
wom en in tech

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One: Introduction– Context and Overview

1

INTRO: CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW

Australian businesses have struggled to keep pace with rapid technological change clinging to outdated processes, products and skills leading to limited innovation and persistent labour and skills shortages.

Exponential technological change is transforming the way we work. It will be critical for workers in all fields and disciplines to have the right skills to effectively harness key emerging technologies.[1] Not only that, but Australia will require an additional flow of talent, especially technology workers to keep up with its international counterparts and the rate of technological change.

A projected 300,000 additional technology workers will be required by 2030.[2]

Yet, the technology workforce – both workers using digital skills as part of their role, and technology workers specifically – are not ready to capitalise on this opportunity. More than a third of businesses say they lack or have outdated Generative AI and digital transformation skills. To date, businesses have relied on recruiting individuals with specialised skills in order to get by. However, this is not sustainable, nor is it a long-term solution given the pace of change. In the future, business and digital fluency will be synonymous.

AUSTRALIA'S GENDERED OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

There is an opportunity to tap into an underutilised pool of talent in Australia's labour market to address these gaps faced by businesses. Currently, just 30% of the Australian technology workforce are women, compared to 44% of the professional workforce more broadly.[3]

Concerningly, despite being identified as a sector with poor gender distribution, 2022 saw a decline in the share of women in the technology sector, indicating that progress to date has been modest.[4]

It is worth noting however, that the technology sector outperforms others on other diversity metrics such as cultural diversity, but lags with age diversity and representation from people with a disability and neurodivergence, yet all have progressed overtime.[5]

CHART 1.1: Technology workers in Australia, 2014 – 2030
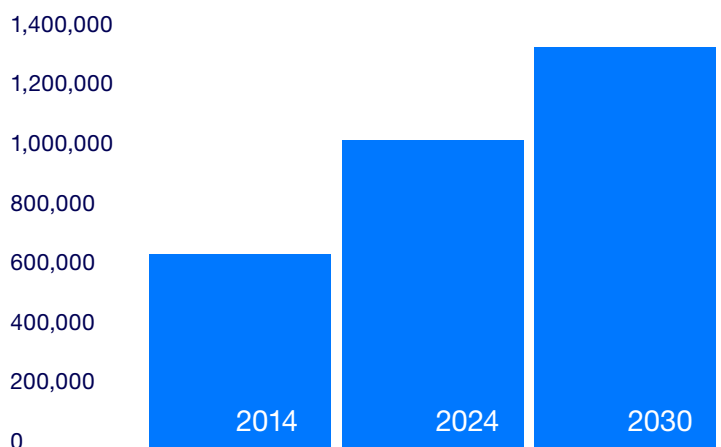
Source: Australian Computer Society Digital Pulse, 2024.

1   Deloitte (2023), Australia's Digital Pulse 2023 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
2   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
3   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Custom Data Set.
4   Deloitte (2023), Australia's Digital Pulse 2023 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
5   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
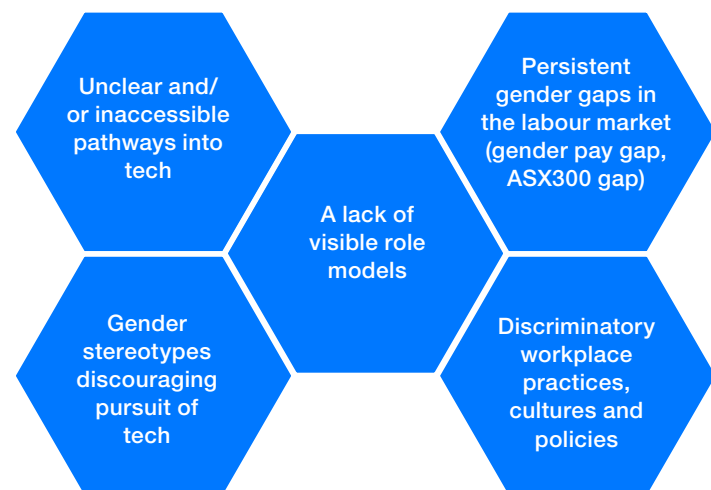
However, diversifying the technology workforce, which has historically been a male-dominated industry due to gender stereotypes, will become essential for embracing technological change and subsequently achieving desirable business outcomes.

There are a plethora of factors driving Australia's sustained gendered occupational distribution and poor gender diversity in the technology profession which largely stems from harmful gender norms, as illustrated in Figure 1.1[1] As a result:

- Many girls and women from the outset are discouraged from pursuing study and career paths that align with technology roles.[2]

- Women working in technology roles often work in male-dominated teams and/or are privy to biases leading to high female attrition rates.[3]

FIGURE 1.1: Gender norms and stereotypes contributing to gendered occupational distribution

Unclear and/or inaccessible pathways into tech

Persistent gender gaps in the labour market (gender pay gap, ASX300 gap)

A lack of visible role models

Gender stereotypes discouraging pursuit of tech

Discriminatory workplace practices, cultures and policies

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2025)

IMPACTS ON BUSINESSES

An absence of gender diversity in technology not only restricts the professional growth of women but exacerbates the challenges faced by Australian businesses amid acute skills and labour shortages.[4] According to a report released by the Department of Industry, Science and Resources, our current STEM pipeline will not meet the forecast demand for skills to drive productivity and looking to underrepresented groups in STEM will alleviate workforce shortage concerns at present and into the future.[5]

Furthermore, as demonstrated in the literature, greater gender diversity has flow on positive effects for businesses and the economy as a whole including:

- stronger financial performance and economic output for organisations[6]

- greater innovation and product development.[7]

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1   Srikanthan. S (17 June 2024), 'Remaking the Norm', Deloitte, <https://www.deloitte.com/au/en/services/economics/perspectives/remaking-the-norm.html>
2   Charlesworth. T, Banaji. M (2019), 'Gender in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics: Issues, Causes, Solutions', The Journal of Neuroscience.
3   Srivastava. S (2019), 'Women in Technology-Reasons for Underrepresentation and What Can Corporates Do to Improve the Gender Diversity'.
4   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
5   Department of Industry, Science and, Resources (2024). Pathway to Diversity in STEM, <https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-02/pathway-to-diversity-in-stem-review-final-report.pdf>
6   BlackRock, (2023), Lifting financial performance by investing in women, <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/literature/whitepaper/lifting-financial-performance-by-investing-in-women.pdf>
7   Deloitte (2024) , Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>

STUDENT TESTIMONIAL

Testimonial with Kate Cowley

Kate's digital marketing background sparked her passion for user experience (UX), a field increasingly central to her team's projects. To future-proof her career, she saw a promising opportunity to transition from digital marketing into a UX and User Interface (UI) design role at BDO.

Initially, Kate tried self-learning through online resources but struggled with conflicting advice and a lack of structure. It was challenging to build the confidence to step into the role without more formal training.

Recognising this, Kate pursued a Graduate Certificate in UX and UI Design at RMIT Online, with the support of her employer. This program offered a clear framework for applying her skills to real-world projects, ultimately instilling the confidence and capabilities necessary for a successful career transition.

"The impact has been huge—not only have I successfully stepped into a more specialised role, but I now feel confident engaging with stakeholders, justifying design decisions with data, and proving the value of my work. Upskilling in UX/UI has significantly increased my career opportunities and earning potential, and I'd encourage anyone considering a move into tech to take the leap."

Kate recognises that having the support of her employer was instrumental to successfully transitioning into a role in tech. Kate wants businesses, governments and education providers to do more to assist those interested in reskilling, for example by offering flexible learning options and financial or time-based support for upskilling.

"Investing in these opportunities not only benefits individuals but strengthens the industry as a whole".

— **KATE COWLEY, UI/UX MANAGER, DIGITAL SOLUTIONS DEVELOPMENT, BDO IN AUSTRALIA**
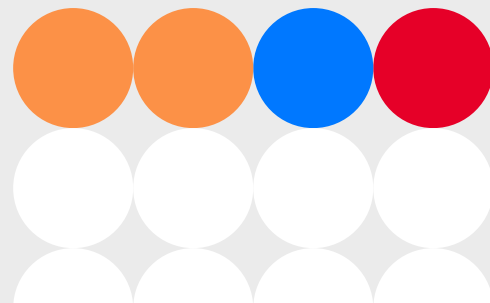
This report aims to highlight the reskilling challenge in tech, quantify the opportunity for addressing this gap and identify solutions currently being explored nationally and internationally.

This report sheds new light on progress made to date by businesses addressing the gender distribution gap, and challenges that lie ahead for businesses which fail to pursue and retain women in technology roles. It will focus on women in technology and the role that upskilling and/or reskilling plays in attracting, retaining and promoting women in the technology field.

This report is set out as follows:

Chapter 2: Progress and setbacks – illustrates progress and setbacks made to date as it relates to upskilling and reskilling women into technology roles.

Chapter 3: Quantifying the opportunity – provides an estimate of the number of women with a short-term reskilling pathway into tech and the higher wage opportunity of moving into technology roles, as well as an estimate of the associated business benefits.

Chapter 4: Solutions – reviews existing initiatives to promote greater gender representation in the technology field by government and industry and explores potential new actions both parties can take.

BESPOKE EMPLOYER SURVEY

– The employer survey was fielded by Ipsos to 436 business leaders across December 2024.

– Survey respondents were individuals who are currently employed as executives, board members and owners, directors, or managers.

– The survey focuses on employers with 100 or more employees.

– When referring to insights across the sample in aggregate, the survey has been weighted by broad industry category in line with ABS business counts data.

A NOTE ON INTERSECTIONALITY IN THIS REPORT

The Diversity Council of Australia defines intersectionality as the ways in which different aspects of an individual's identity exposes them to overlapping forms of discrimination and marginalisation.[1] Such identity aspects include but is not limited to gender, race, culture, sexual orientation, class, age, disability status, education, Indigenous status, and regionality.

The analysis presented in the following report captures different demographics of women within, and reskilling into the technology sector, and comments on intersectionality where appropriate. However, it is recognised that this research is not sufficient in fully understanding the effects of intersectionality and bigger focus should be placed on further research adopting an intersectional approach to research and analysis.

The research in this report draws on a range of diverse data sources including:

• A bespoke survey of approximately 436 employers in Australia, fielded by Ipsos in December 2024
• O*NET data describing skill similarity between occupations
• Economy wide data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)
• Available research and literature on skills and reskilling, informed by a detailed desktop review
• Consultation with businesses and women in technology to understand their experiences.

1   Diversity Council of Australia (2023), 'What is intersectionality', Diversity Council of Australia <https://www.dca.org.au/resources/di-planning/what-is-intersectionality>
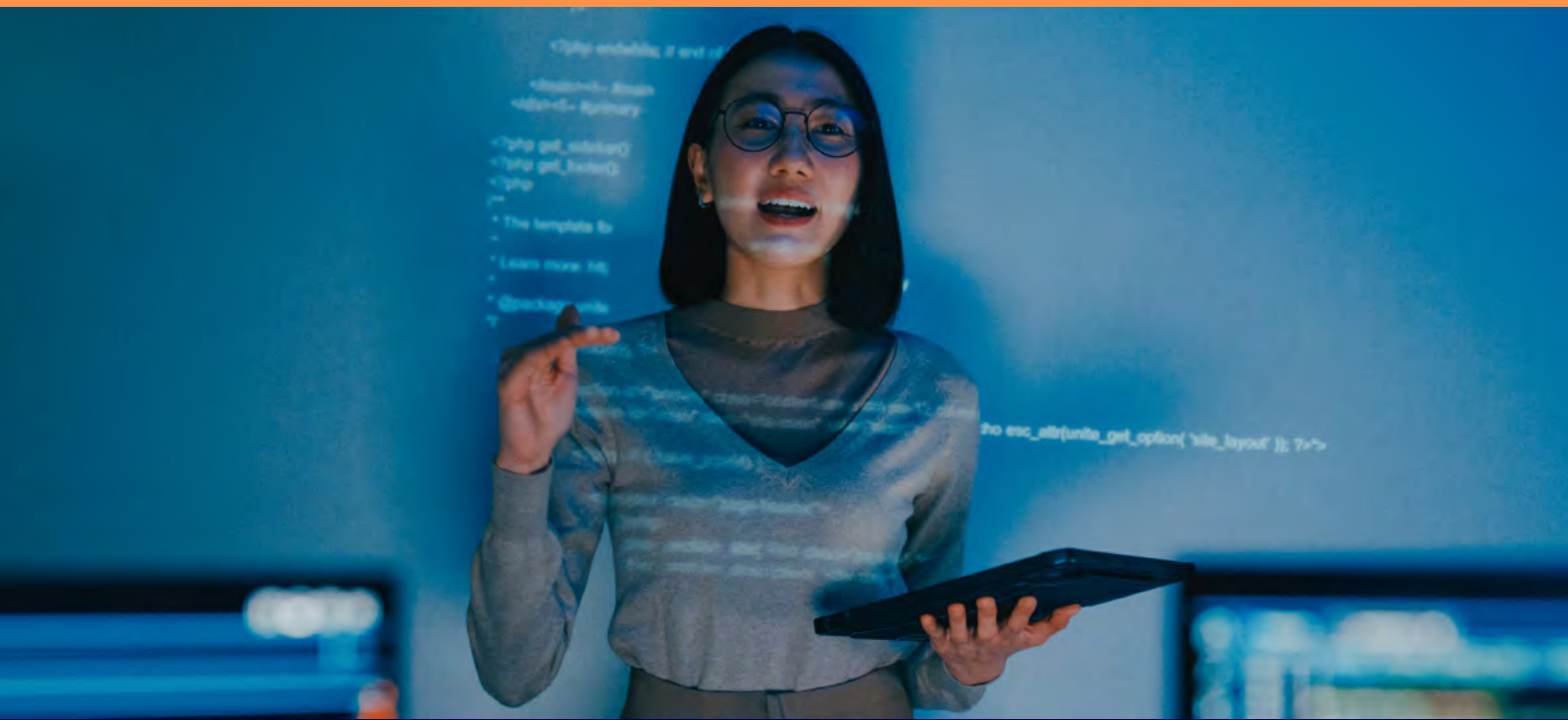
chapter

Two: Progress and setbacks

2

SIGNS OF PROGRESS

Despite the difficulty associated with addressing gender under-representation in the technology sector, progress at varying levels has been made to date by many surveyed businesses.
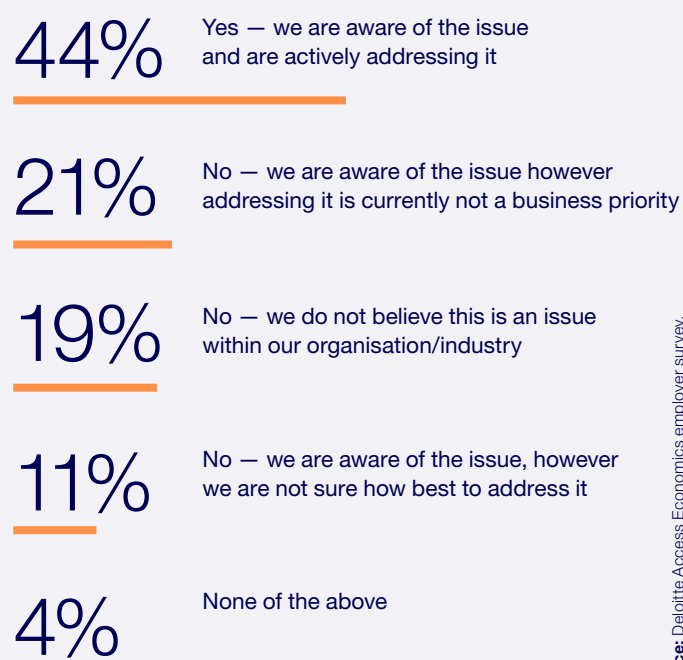
Attracting more women into technology is a significant and complex challenge and requires large-scale buy-in. While there's still much more work to be done, there are signs of progress. As shown in Chart 2.1, close to three-quarters of surveyed businesses reported that they were aware of the issue, and close to half had taken steps to actively address it.

In addition, 83% of surveyed businesses have either already implemented a fair and inclusive hiring process designed to minimise the impact of unconscious biases or are planning to adopt one in the future (Chart 2.2, overleaf). This signals that many businesses have taken steps to address concerns regarding a lack of diversity.

While the signs are promising, the literature implies that multiple targeted initiatives aimed at improving hiring processes and/or workplace culture is often more effective at attracting and retaining women into technology roles.[1] Yet, when considering more specific initiatives, just one-third of surveyed businesses have established an internal network for women working in technology roles and 40% have employed active targets relating to the hiring and promotion of women (Chart 2.2).

Furthermore, findings imply that close to half of surveyed businesses have pursued upskilling and reskilling opportunities for their workforce as a means to promote gender diversity in their workforce (Chart 2.2). Research advises that workplaces with employee and/or people-oriented cultures that offer and actively promote training and mentoring opportunities are often the most successful at attracting and retaining women in technology roles.[2]

CHART 2.1: Is your organisation currently addressing issues around the need for greater representation of women in technology roles?

44% Yes — we are aware of the issue and are actively addressing it

21% No — we are aware of the issue however addressing it is currently not a business priority

19% No — we do not believe this is an issue within our organisation/industry

11% No — we are aware of the issue, however we are not sure how best to address it

4% None of the above

Source: Deloitte Access Economics employer survey.
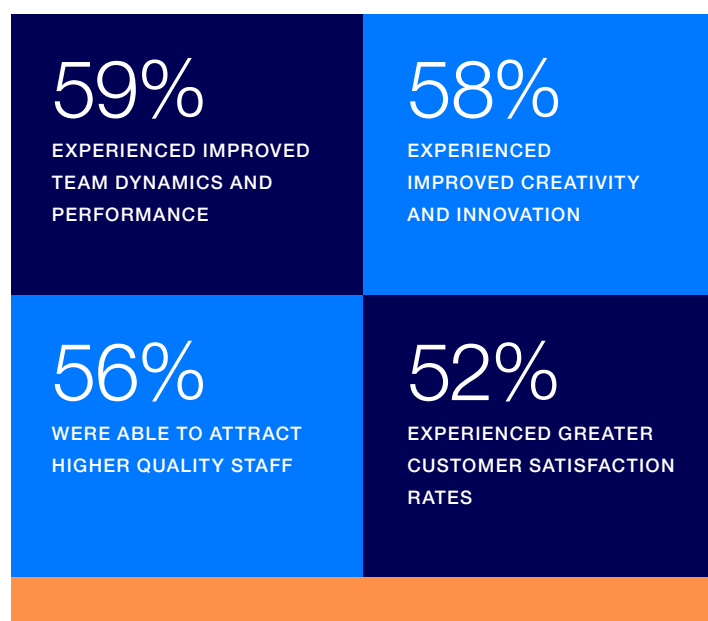
1   Srivastava. S, (2019), 'Women in Technology-Reasons for Underrepresentation and What Can Corporates Do to Improve the Gender Diversity',
2   Jones. E (2023), 'The Fallacy of "Lowering the Bar" to Hire Women: Breaking Through The Prejudice', Project F <https://projectf.com.au/the-f-word-blog/the-fallacy-of-lowering-the-bar-to-hire-women-breaking-through-the-prejudice>

THE RESKILLING CHALLENGE

Surveyed businesses have pursued numerous initiatives to varying degrees with the majority of those achieving more diverse workforces experiencing business wide benefits.

59%
EXPERIENCED IMPROVED TEAM DYNAMICS AND PERFORMANCE

58%
EXPERIENCED IMPROVED CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

56%
WERE ABLE TO ATTRACT HIGHER QUALITY STAFF

52%
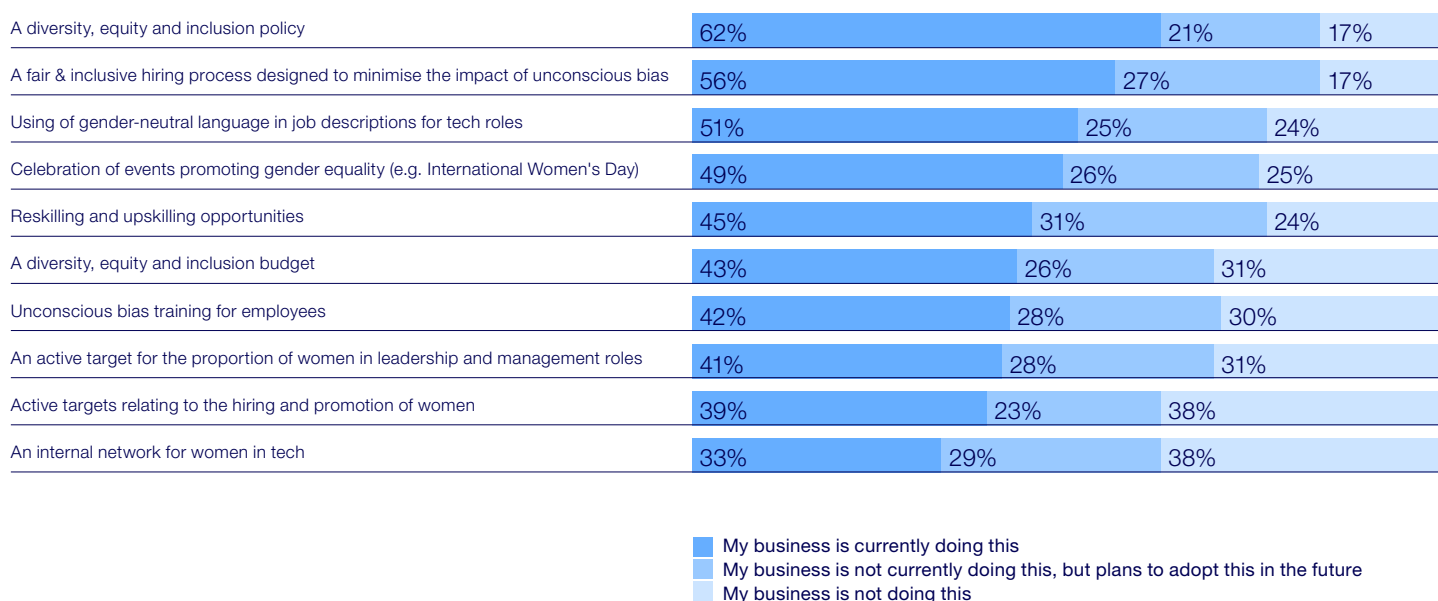EXPERIENCED GREATER CUSTOMER SATISFACTION RATES

Surveyed businesses who had achieved a gender representation in their technology roles greater than the national average (i.e., >30%), reported to have experienced broad business benefits.

These results are supported by a strong volume of research that proposes more diverse workforces achieve stronger business outcomes. For example:

- One study found that companies where middle management mirrors women's representation in the overall workforce saw 36 basis points higher risk adjusted returns.[1]

- A McKinsey report found that companies in the top quartile of gender diversity on executive teams were 25% more likely to have above average profitability than the fourth quartile.[2]

- Research conducted by First Sentier reveals that companies with more diverse senior management teams have 30% higher profit margins.[3]

CHART 2.2: What is your organisation currently doing to promote gender diversity in your technology workforce?

	My business is currently doing this	My business is not currently doing this, but plans to adopt this in the future	My business is not doing this
A diversity, equity and inclusion policy	62%	21%	17%
A fair & inclusive hiring process designed to minimise the impact of unconscious bias	56%	27%	17%
Using of gender-neutral language in job descriptions for tech roles	51%	25%	24%
Celebration of events promoting gender equality (e.g. International Women's Day)	49%	26%	25%
Reskilling and upskilling opportunities	45%	31%	24%
A diversity, equity and inclusion budget	43%	26%	31%
Unconscious bias training for employees	42%	28%	30%
An active target for the proportion of women in leadership and management roles	41%	28%	31%
Active targets relating to the hiring and promotion of women	39%	23%	38%
An internal network for women in tech	33%	29%	38%

■ My business is currently doing this
■ My business is not currently doing this, but plans to adopt this in the future
■ My business is not doing this

Source: Deloitte Access Economics employer survey.

1   BlackRock (2023), 'Lifting financial performance by investing in women', <https://www.blackrock.com/corporate/literature/whitepaper/lifting-financial-performance-by-investing-in-women.pdf>
2   McKinsey & Company (2020), 'Diversity wins: How inclusion matters', <https://www.mckinsey.com/featured-insights/diversity-and-inclusion/diversity-wins-how-inclusion-matters>
3   First Sentier Investors (2022), 'Decoding the diversity premium', <https://www.firstsentierinvestors.com.au/au/en/institutional/insights/latest-insights/decoding-the-diversity-premium.html>

SETBACKS

Businesses encounter challenges to actively pursuing greater gender representation with many believing the industry and government should do more to attract women into the field.
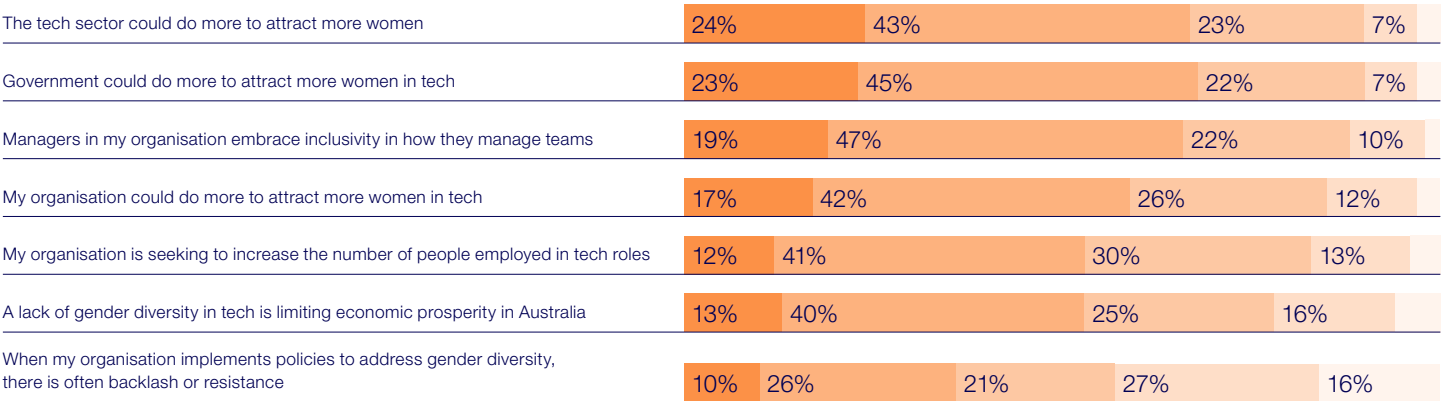
Despite the benefits experienced and initiatives implemented by many surveyed businesses, the majority reported experiencing challenges in their pursuit to alleviate workforce and technology skill shortages by attracting and retaining female talent.

Over one-third of businesses (36%) state that they face backlash or resistance when implementing policies to address talent and skills shortages through the hiring and retention of female talent (Chart 2.3).

It is therefore no coincidence that surveyed businesses have signalled a call to action with just over two-thirds thinking the technology sector and/or the government could do more to attract women into technology roles, more so than themselves (59%).

However, one in five (19%) surveyed businesses still claim that gender diversity in technology is not a problem and a further third of surveyed businesses say addressing the gender distribution in technology isn't a priority or are unsure of how best to address it (Chart 2.1).

CHART 2.3: To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding diversity in the technology sector and in your organisation?

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The tech sector could do more to attract more women	24%	43%	23%	7%	
Government could do more to attract more women in tech	23%	45%	22%	7%	
Managers in my organisation embrace inclusivity in how they manage teams	19%	47%	22%	10%	
My organisation could do more to attract more women in tech	17%	42%	26%	12%	
My organisation is seeking to increase the number of people employed in tech roles	12%	41%	30%	13%	
A lack of gender diversity in tech is limiting economic prosperity in Australia	13%	40%	25%	16%	
When my organisation implements policies to address gender diversity, there is often backlash or resistance	10%	26%	21%	27%	16%

■ Strongly agree
■ Agree
■ Neutral
■ Disagree
■ Strongly disagree

Source: Deloitte Access Economics employer survey.

A conversation with Ingrid Russell, managing REA Group's entry level programs into tech

REA Group's Springboard to Tech program has helped expand their talent pool, kept talent within the business and has emphasised how technology roles can be collaborative.

REA Group is a leading global digital business specialising in property and is host to a large data and technology-based workforce. REA acknowledges the critical need to address the technology talent pool shortage by fostering gender parity, a commitment that has been integrated into the core business objectives. This has been realised through the Springboard to Tech program, an initiative designed to increase female representation in technology roles at the organisation. Through this and other strategic programs and pilots, REA is actively driving change, aspiring to be an industry leader for diversity in the technology sector.

Springboard to Tech is a 12-month program which allows participants to rotate through different areas of the business where they learn different technology driven interests, and at the conclusion of the program, they are offered a permanent role at REA. Participants are selected based on potential and attitude rather than proven technical capability, while also considering the transferability of their current skills base. To date, the program has welcomed a variety of participants (both within and external to the current company workforce) from former teachers, chefs and healthcare workers, to mothers returning to work and migrants with strict working rights.

The program has been in operation since 2018 delivering nine cohorts of participants and has supported the growth of female representation in technology roles within the organisation to 32%. Additionally, the program has seen:

- 92% of graduates since 2018 still employed at REA Group in 2025;

- 95% of graduates earn a promotion within their first three years of completion;

- 21% of graduates earn multiple promotions since completing the program.

Ingrid Russell attributes this strong retention and promotion success to a combination of factors including REA's positive culture, flexible working arrangements for people at all stages in their careers, and a "fail quickly and safely" ethos. Of great value has also been the unintended and self-organised alumni network, with graduates of the program hosting 'Lunch and Learn' initiatives as well as checking in daily to share their small wins.

Furthermore, Ingrid explained that participants strongly valued the "pair programming" approach within the program, a method which partners participants with a buddy to collaboratively approach a task.

It often involves one person conducting the coding while the other directs and oversees, allowing for real-time feedback and exposure to different working styles or approaches to undertaking a task.

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Ingrid specifically highlighted the benefits of the program in creating a more diverse technology workforce, emphasising its role in creating diversity of thought and integrating diverse perspectives into operations and decision making. The program, and diverse workforces more broadly, have the power to create valuable learning opportunities for all staff, noting the power of graduates sharing learnings they have adopted with the organisation.

"People think of coding and technology roles more broadly as a solo activity, but software development in particular is a highly collaborative practice, at minimum involving 7 – 10 people."

"We need more companies doing initiatives like these. It should not be an exciting venture, it should be a standard way of working. It is clearly a worthwhile investment."

Ingrid noted REA's 12 million monthly user base and the importance of ensuring its technology workforce becomes more reflective of this. Consequently, REA has begun exploring and piloting numerous other initiatives.

Recognising the low female representation in System Engineering, REA launched the WISE Program (Women in Systems Engineering). Now in its second year, WISE targets women in the penultimate year of study, aiming to create a robust talent pipeline for the graduate program. Ingrid is optimistic that this initiative will further support female participation in the organisation's technology roles.

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chapter

Three: Quantifying
the opportunity

3

Australian businesses are experiencing a shortage of technology skills, but there exists an untapped pool of talent that could reskill into tech.

The technology sector has experienced ongoing challenges finding the right technology talent, and enough of it. Australia needs an estimated 1.3 million technology workers by 2030 to meet industry demand, or 300,000 more than are currently in the technology workforce.[1] The Australian government is currently committed to reaching 1.2 million by 2030, but industry demand is likely to exceed that target.[2]

Australia will need 1.3 million tech workers by 2030 to meet demand

Attracting more women into technology roles may be a solution to Australia's digital skills crisis. It will benefit businesses, by enabling access to skilled labour needed to take advantage of emerging digital technologies. But it will also benefit women directly who receive a wage dividend from reskilling into technology.

This report models the benefits to women, and to business, from halving the gender gap in the share of women employed in technology roles in Australia.

This would see the share of women increase from 30 to 39% of all technology workers, representing an additional 137,300 women moving into the technology workforce.[3]

Of course, not all women will reskill into technology roles. To understand which women are going to reskill, this report considers skills similarity data across over 350 occupations to understand how they align to skills needed in core technology roles. This report drew on detailed skills data from O*NET, a database that analyses what workers do and know across different occupations to determine how similar skills are between two occupations.

This analysis identifies a cohort of women who are in occupations which have a short-term reskilling pathway into multiple technology occupations. Practically, this means they could reskill into technology in approximately six months, with some on the job training and a short course. There are 661,300 women in occupations that meet this criteria.

While there may be other incentives to reskill into technology, the modelling for this report considers women who have a financial imperative to reskill into technology. Largely, these women will come from advertising and marketing professionals, purchasing and supply logistics clerks, and other white-collar professions.

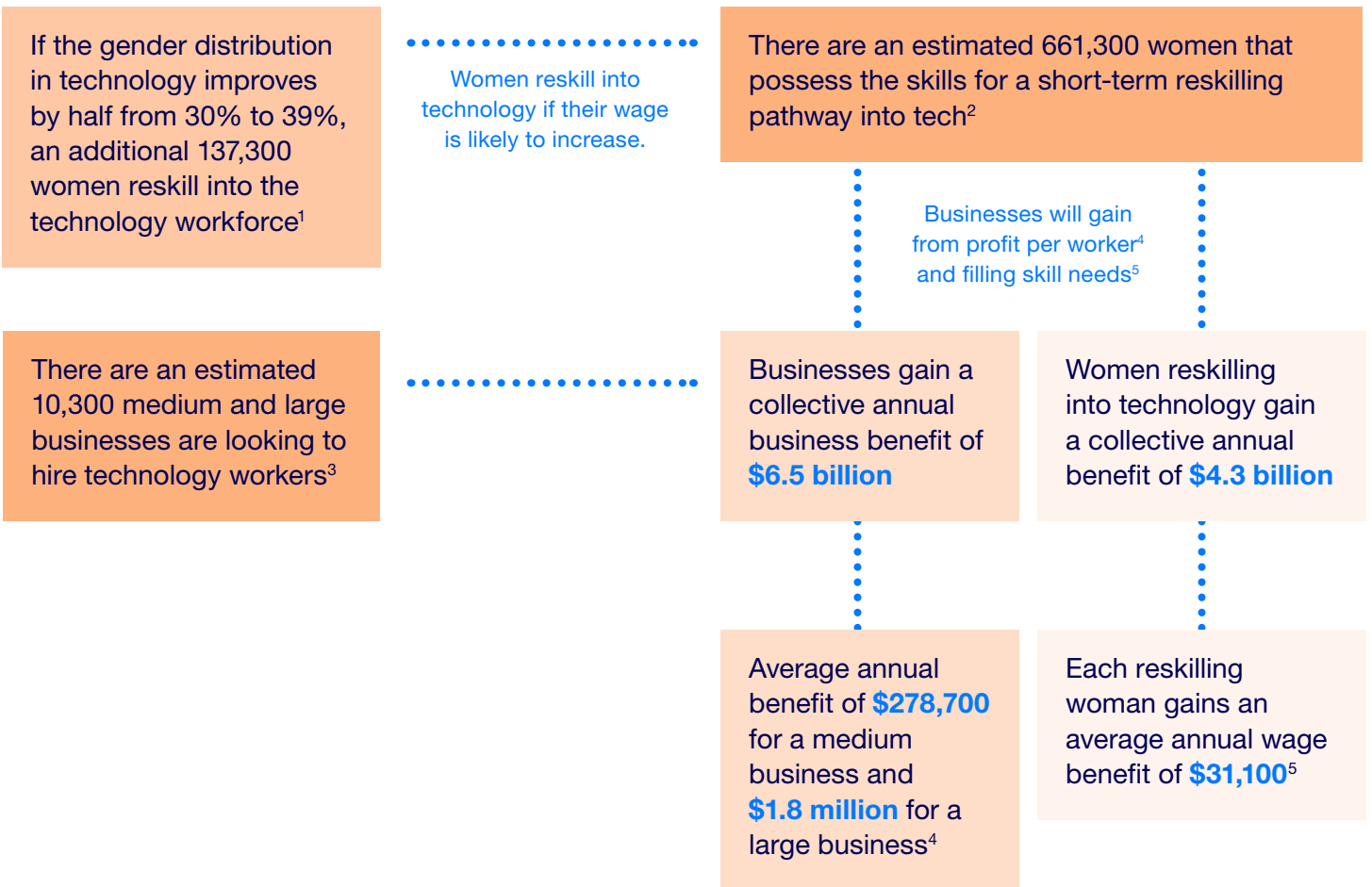The methodology for quantifying this opportunity is shown in Figure 3.1 on the following page.

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1   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
2   Technology Council of Australia (2023), 'Technology Jobs Update' <TechCouncil-Tech-Jobs-Update-May-2023_final-1.pdf>
3   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Custom Data Set.

MODELLING THE OPPORTUNITY

Reducing the gender imbalance in technology could create a substantial economic benefit to reskilling women and businesses.

FIGURE 3.1: Modelling the opportunity

If the gender distribution in technology improves by half from 30% to 39%, an additional 137,300 women reskill into the technology workforce[1]

Women reskill into technology if their wage is likely to increase.

There are an estimated 661,300 women that possess the skills for a short-term reskilling pathway into tech[2]

Businesses will gain from profit per worker[4] and filling skill needs[5]

There are an estimated 10,300 medium and large businesses are looking to hire technology workers[3]

Businesses gain a collective annual business benefit of **$6.5 billion**

Women reskilling into technology gain a collective annual benefit of **$4.3 billion**

Average annual benefit of **$278,700** for a medium business and **$1.8 million** for a large business[4]

Each reskilling woman gains an average annual wage benefit of **$31,100**[5]

1. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), custom data request
2. O*net (2022), Related Occupations, <https://www.onetcenter.org/dictionary/29.1/excel/related_occupations.html>
3. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), Characteristics of Australian businesses <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/technology-and-innovation/characteristics-australian-business/latest-release>
4. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Australian Industry, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/latest-release>
5. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Employee Earnings and Hours, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release>

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR WOMEN

Women could gain in-demand skills and greater earnings potential if there were adequate short-term reskilling opportunities available

✳ If the gender gap in technology halved, women who reskilled into technology roles would earn an estimated $31,100 more per year. This equates to a collective $4.3 billion wage benefit across the 137,300 women short-term reskillers.

Although the typical wage for women in technology occupations is higher than average, not all women would see a wage increase when reskilling into tech. Modelling for this report assumes women will only reskill if they will receive a wage premium in tech, relative to their current occupation.

This scenario sees 137,300 women reskilling into technology, yielding an average weekly wage premium of $600 per person. This wage premium represents an annual salary increase of $31,100, equivalent to an 31% raise on average compared to their current salary. These women are likely to move from professional and white-collar professions, such as advertising and marketing professionals and purchasing and supply logistics clerks.*

It's expected that reskillers are unlikely to receive a wage dividend immediately, as when entering a new occupation it can take time to transition and gain the relevant experience. However, if the average wage in an occupation is higher, short-term reskillers may accept a temporary entry level wage for more promising long-term wage prospects. For a benchmark comparison, consider the progression of technology wages by age. Data from the Census suggests technology workers start earning the average technology wage when they enter their 30s. Those aged under 30 are typically paid 25% less than the average technology wage.[1]

Scenario

Gender distribution in technology improves by half from 30% to 39%. An additional 137,300 women reskill into tech.

Benefit to women:

31.1k
MORE PER YEAR IN WAGES FOR WOMEN RESKILLING INTO TECH, OR $600 MORE PER WEEK

4.3b
COLLECTIVE ANNUAL BENEFIT THE WOMEN RESKILLING INTO TECH

31%
AVERAGE WAGE INCREASE FOR WOMEN SHORT-TERM RESKILLERS

1   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2021), Census
*   This number accounts for supply constraints and the gender composition of supplying occupations.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR BUSINESSES

Businesses can fill critical skill shortages by embracing women reskilling into technology

Halving the gender gap in technology represents a collective benefit of $6.5 billion to Australian businesses, from the additional talent reskilling into the industry. This equates to $278,700 per medium business and $1.8 million per large business.

There are an estimated 7,900 medium and 2,400 large businesses that hire technology workers in Australia,[1,2] that are positioned to benefit from this opportunity. Technology skills are in high demand, and there is an untapped source of talent that could be trained to fill the gap.

On average, businesses pay $31,000 more per year for tech workers. These workers generate additional profits of $16,400 each on average, relative to the occupations they reskilled from. This wage premium, as well as the additional profits generated for the business, reflects the average value reskilled workers add to businesses.

Collectively, medium and large would gain an estimated $6.5 billion business benefit from the 137,300 additional women reskilling into technology.

This includes an average $278,700 gain per medium business and $1.8 million per large business. This benefit includes the wage premium paid to women reskilling as well as the additional profit per worker[3] earned by businesses, compared to profits that would've been earned under their previous occupation.*

This is a conservative estimate of the true benefit businesses would experience from filling their skills needs and improving the gender diversity of their technology workforce. These include benefits such as those discussed in chapter 2, including improved innovation and team dynamics, that are likely to create an even greater dividend to businesses over time.

A concentrated and coordinated effort by business, industries and governments is required to realise this opportunity through supporting reskilling pathways and creating inclusive work environments for women in tech.

Scenario

Gender distribution in technology improves by half from 30% to 39%. An additional 137,300 women reskill into tech.

Benefit to businesses:

10.3k — AUSTRALIAN BUSINESSES THAT TRIED TO RECRUIT ICT WORKERS COULD FIND A SUITABLE CANDIDATE

$278,700 — BENEFIT PER MEDIUM BUSINESS

1.8m — BENEFIT PER LARGE BUSINESS

6.5 billion — COLLECTIVE BENEFIT FOR MEDIUM AND LARGE BUSINESSES

1   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Counts of Australian Businesses <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/business-indicators/counts-australian-businesses-including-entries-and-exits/latest-release>
2   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), Characteristics of Australian businesses <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/technology-and-innovation/characteristics-australian-business/latest-release>
3   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Australian Industry, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/industry-overview/australian-industry/latest-release>
*This is adjusted for the anticipated loss from women leaving their previous occupation.

chapter

Four: Solutions

51% — A fair and inclusive hiring process designed to minimise the impact of unconscious biases

41% — Reskilling and upskilling opportunities

41% — An active target for the proportion of women in leadership and management of roles

39% — Active targets relating to the hiring and promotion of women

37% — A diversity, equity and inclusion policy

21% — Unconscious bias training for employees

Source: Deloitte Access Economics employer survey.

4

BUSINESS ACTIONS

Surveyed businesses identified fair and inclusive hiring practices, reskilling and upskilling opportunities, and active targets as the initiatives most effective at progressing gender equity in tech.

Clearly, there's an enormous opportunity associated with reskilling women into technology, as a way to build the stocktake of digital workers in Australia.

This ambition has been identified before. Efforts have been made to date by Australian businesses, industry bodies and governments to improve the gender distribution of Australia's technology workforce.

Insights from the employer survey revealed that over half (51%) of businesses believe a fair and inclusive hiring process has the largest impact on progressing gender equity in tech, with 41% stating that reskilling and upskilling opportunities and an active target for the proportion of women in leadership roles would also have an impact (see Chart 4.1). This is supported by research which suggests a 'multipronged' approach (e.g. rewiring hiring practices, using technology to reduce bias, dedication to retaining women) is more effective than traditional diversity initiatives (e.g. unconscious bias training) which can often backfire, and was ranked as the least effective by surveyed businesses.[1]

Furthermore, research suggests that while many organisations are committed to increasing the number of women hired, many neglect efforts to improve retention and promotion rates, which often is the primary factor driving low gender diversity in the sector.[2] Research suggests that more than 50% women who join the technology industry are likely to quit before the age of 35.[3] Additionally more than half of surveyed businesses reported insufficient internal opportunities (e.g. lack of reskilling/upskilling opportunities, unclear paths for promotion or career progression) as the primary challenge faced when attempting to retain women in technology roles. Moving forward, Australian businesses should prioritise and invest in offering such opportunities to women in technology roles.

In the short-term, businesses could identify their own cohort of potential short-term reskillers. Businesses could approach this cohort to understand their appetite to reskill into technology roles. Eligible women would be provided with time off to retrain, with businesses responsible for paying for any relevant retraining programs. At the conclusion of the retraining exercise, women would be guaranteed a role in technology.

1 Project F (2023), 'Why Creating Diversity in the Technology Sector Needs True Progressive HR', Project F <https://projectf.com.au/the-f-word-blog/progressive-hr-and-diversity-in-tech>
2 Srivastava. S, (2019), 'Women in Technology-Reasons for Underrepresentation and What Can Corporates Do to Improve the Gender Diversity'
3 World Economic Forum (2023), 'Here's why women are leaving the tech industry - and what can be done about it' <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2023/03/women-are-leaving-tech-roles-heres-how-we-can-support-them-to-improve-retention>

A conversation with Angkana Whiley, founder of the Whiley Group

Angkana champions women from diverse and non-data and technology backgrounds for their unique contributions to innovation, urging the technology sector to recognise their value and provide pathways for upskilling and reskilling.

Starting her journey with a degree in Anthropology, her first role on the trading floor of a UK bank sparked a love of data and technology. This led her through various roles over her 25-year career to date including from policy officer and data analyst to serving on the Senior Executive Service in the Australian and ACT Governments. She is involved in industry roles including as a member of the Australian Computer Society, the Australian Evaluation Society Policy Committee, and the Women in ICT Board.

Angkana shares her view of navigating challenges as a woman in technology:

"Women in technology face inherent cultural and systemic biases that go against us, once we enter the sector, we have to fight hard to prove our value, and being recognised and promoted can be an uphill battle"

Angkana has a mission to bring more diverse voices, specialist capabilities and authentic representation to solve complex data and policy problems. This led her to establish Whiley Group where she works with her clients and partners to drive transformative change through designing and delivering innovative, data-driven solutions.

"Diversity of views and perspectives, and importantly diversity of solutions, is driven by having a workforce from diverse backgrounds. We need workers from non-STEM disciplines to be part of the solution."

Angkana values multi-disciplinary teams in digital transformation and emphasises the importance of technology workers collaborating with those from diverse backgrounds to inspire lateral thinking and creative problem-solving.

In discussing how the technology sector can attract and support a greater pool of diverse talent, Angkana highlighted the power of lifelong learning as a key driver of her success. She highlights how upskilling through microlearning has enabled her to thrive in dynamic roles. Angkana emphasised that this is particularly important for women, who often encounter challenges in environments that may not fully support their growth in the rapidly evolving technology landscape.

"I am living proof of the power of reskilling. Over 25 years, I have upskilled and driven my own career and learning journey. Microlearning is an opportunistic way to help people transition into data and technology roles."

— ANGKANA WHILEY, FOUNDER, WHILEY GROUP

Angkana advocated for targeting the reskilling of women at different life stages into new career paths (like return-to-work programs). She suggested that reskilled workers may even have an advantage over traditional technology workers in certain roles, given their ability to take a multi-disciplinary approach to designing technological solutions.

Angkana also highlighted the importance of mentorship and allyship for women's progression, and the importance of having a network of people that can support you through your career journey. She firmly endorsed the need for structural changes to promote diversity within technology and to counter existing biases that can impact decision-making, including going beyond quotas to pursue new ways of hiring, retaining, mentoring and promoting women especially into leadership roles.
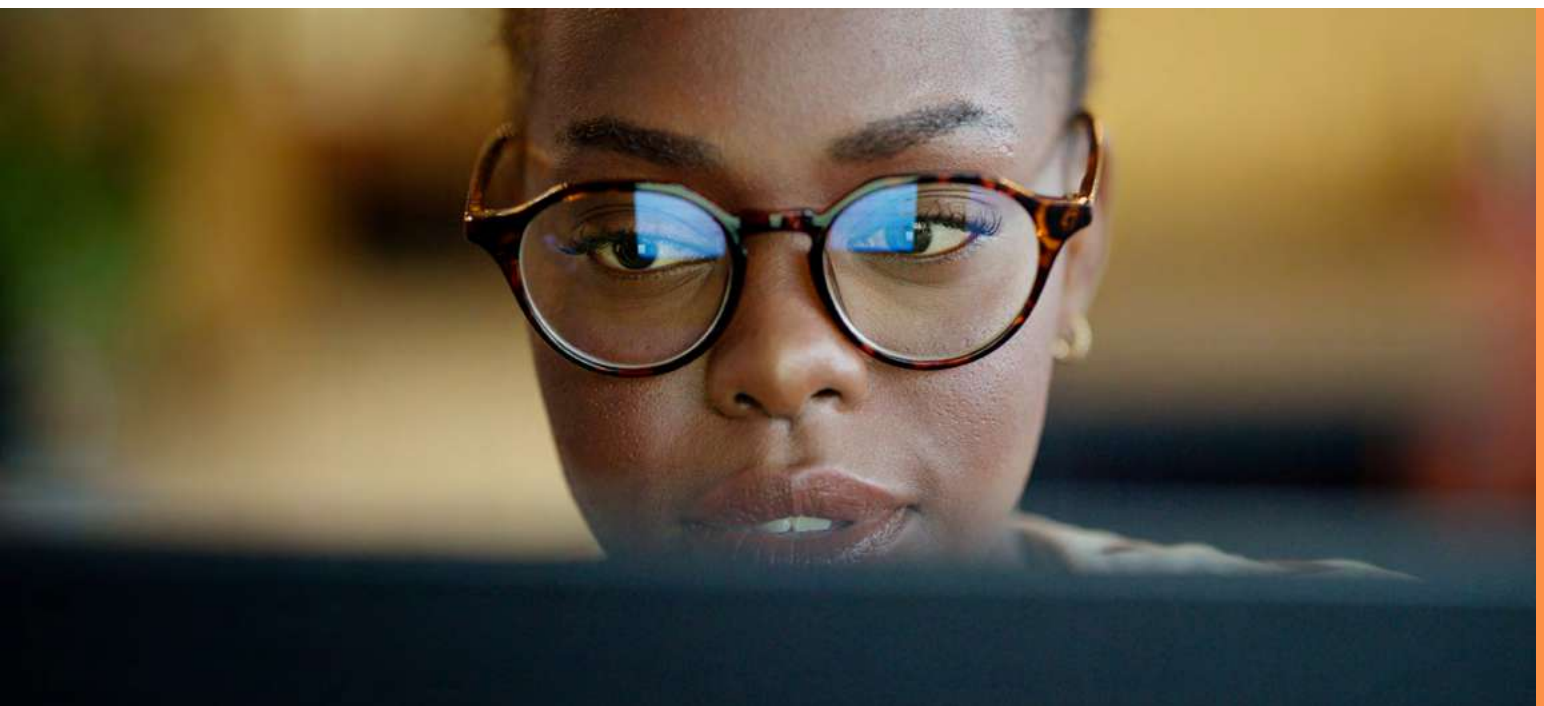
EXISTING INITIATIVES

Industry and government have taken proactive steps to pursue activities aimed at promoting and enforcing greater gender diversity in the technology sector and workforce.

While there are actions businesses can take to attract more women into technology, business action alone will not suffice. Industry and government more broadly has a responsibility to attract and retain more women into technology.

TABLE 4.1: Illustrative activities to promote greater gender diversity in the technology sector

AUSTRALIAN COMPUTER SOCIETY (ACS)[1]	Promotes technology study and career pathways through a series of professional development initiatives aimed at women, including the Women of STEM Scholarship program[2] and mentorship opportunities for women in STEM.[3] The ACS regularly releases thought leadership reports on the importance of increasing the diversity of the technology workforce, and offers resources to organisations implementing initiatives to improve gender diversity in tech.
PROJECT F[4]	Project F has emerged as a leading consultancy specialising in enhancing gender diversity in the technology sector. This reflects a broader trend of organisations engaging experts to address the industry's diversity challenges. Companies like Canva, Google, and Blackbird are already seeing measurable benefits from initiatives implemented with the guidance of Project F, showcasing the tangible impact of prioritising inclusivity and equity in tech.
TECH COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIA (TCA)[5]	Recently announced new standards to improve diversity in the technology sector. The standards framework allows companies to assess themselves on their performance regarding diversity, equity and inclusion within their organisation and provides guidance and accountability for organisations in the field.

Source: Deloitte Access Economics (2025)

Technology industry bodies and representatives

Recent years have seen technology industry bodies promote the need for greater diversity in the technology sector, as outlined in Table 4.1. This list is not exhaustive however helps to illustrate current activities being undertaken in the sector.

Governments

Governments also have a role to play. Nationally, numerous Australian government departments have enacted initiatives and policies to improve the gender disparity in technology (and other male-dominated professions). These policies largely aim to address the barriers experienced by women in the skilling stage of entering the technology workforce. For example, The Australian Department of Education funds the Women in STEM Cadetships and Advanced Apprenticeships program which promotes equality of opportunity in higher education by increasing access to, and participation of women studying STEM.[6] The program supports part-time higher education STEM pathways for employed women and has been funded from 2020-21 to 2026-27.

The Australian Department of Employment and Workplace Relations oversees the Building Women's Careers Program which funds partnership projects that advance structural and cultural change to improve women's access to flexible, safe and inclusive training and work opportunities within male-dominated industries including technology.[7]

Various state departments have also invested in improving the overall diversity of the technology sector. The NSW Digital Skills Workforce Compact is a formal partnership between NSW government, the digital industry and education and training providers collaborating to address projected digital workforce shortages.[8] This collective has also committed to a 20% Alternative Pathways pledge that 20% of entry level hires will come from alternative pathways by 2030 (e.g. non-university routes).[9] The Victorian government launched a partnership with social enterprise Code Like a Girl to deliver five paid internships for women within government departments following participation in a 4-month coding course.[10]

1. Australian Computer Society (2019), 'Implementing Diversity and Inclusion', <https://www.acs.org.au/insightsandpublications/reports-publications/diversity-and-inclusion-reference-guide.html>
2. Australian Computer Society Foundation (2023), 'Hero Women of STEM', <https://www.acsfoundation.com.au/post/hero-women-of-stem>
3. Australian Computer Society (2024), 'Become a Mentor for Girls in STEM', <https://membership.acs.org.au/member-insight/20240118-BrainSTEM-Mentorship.html>
4. Project F (2023), 'About us', <https://projectf.com.au/about-us>
5. Technology Council of Australia (2024), 'Technology Council launches new industry standards platform to help improve diversity in tech', <https://techcouncil.com.au/newsroom/tech-council-launches-new-industry-standards-platform-to-help-improve-diversity-in-tech>
6. Department of Education, 'Women in STEM Cadetships and Advanced Apprenticeships', Australian Government, <https://www.education.gov.au/women-stem-cadetships-and-advanced-apprenticeships>
7. Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, 'Building Women's Careers Program', Australian Government, <https://www.dewr.gov.au/building-womens-careers-program>
8. Department of Education, 'NSW Digital Skills and Workforce Compact', NSW Government, <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nsw-digital-compact>
9. Department of Education, '20% Alternative Pathways Pledge', NSW Government <https://www.nsw.gov.au/education-and-training/nsw-digital-compact/20-per-cent-alternative-pathways-pledge>
10. Premier of Victoria, 'Code Breakers Pave The Way For More Women In Tech', 28 May 2022 <https://www.premier.vic.gov.au/code-breakers-pave-way-more-women-tech>

More can be done to attract women into technology as demonstrated by international government exemplars.

> While the technology sector and Australian State and Federal Governments already have some initiatives in place, there is more that can be done to help encourage women to reskill into technology.

A recent review released by the Australian government on pathways to diversity in STEM identifies a list of further opportunities government can pursue to address current gaps in STEM fields and programs.[1] One item of note from the review was the need for a collaborative approach to offering upskilling and reskilling programs throughout the career lifecycle to accelerate progress. While there are strong signs of buy-in and progress from Australian industry bodies and/or government departments separately, more can be done collectively to address the issue as shown from international examples. For example, The US Department of State in collaboration with The Power of International Education runs the "TechWomen" initiative which connects women in early-stage STEM careers from four separate continents to established women in the industry to build stronger networks and receive mentorship opportunities.[2]

Furthermore, it is important to consider and ensure the accessibility of skilling programs to meet the needs of diverse groups. For example, the Canadian industry body (techNation Canada) promote and operate a

number of programs including a career ready program for Indigenous students (Zgaabi) aimed at connecting post-secondary students with leaders in the industry through more informal methods of networking (e.g. hosting gathering circles).[3]

Additionally, the United Arab Emirates government launched "The Digital School" initiative, an online platform that provides certified online education opportunities in an accessible and flexible format with the intent of predominantly serving young people in refugee camps and marginalised communities.[4]

Finally, skilling programs must be paired with meaningful industry exposure such as networking and mentoring initiatives. These opportunities not only attract more women to the sector, but also equip them with the connections and practical insights to thrive. For example, NASSCOM, an industry representative for the Indian IT industry, has designed and runs an initiative – Women's Wizards Rule technology Program – that extends beyond skill enhancement to involve mentoring programs and promotion opportunities within the 190 organisations participating in the program.[5] Furthermore, techUK, a UK based technology industry representative has committed to regularly sponsoring programs including the "Empower Women to Lead Cyber Security" initiative which supports the creation of a network of female leaders in technology across the UK.[6]

Ultimately, it is imperative for businesses, industry, and government to take collective action in addressing gender disparity in the technology sector. The benefits of greater gender diversity extend far beyond fairness — it drives innovation, improves financial performance, and strengthens the national workforce.

1   Department of Industry Science and Resources, 'Pathway to Diversity in STEM Review – Final Recommendations', Australian Government, https://www.industry.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-02/pathway-to-diversity-in-stem-review-final-report.pdf>
2   TechWomen, 'What is TechWomen' , <https://www.techwomen.org/>
3   Technation Canada, 'Women in Leadership', <https://technationcanada.ca/en/industry-growth/diversity-inclusion/women-in-leadership/>
4   The United Arab Emirates' Government Portal, 'The Digital School', < https://u.ae/en/information-and-services/education/online-training/the-digital-school>
5   Thomas. R, 'EmPowerHer: Nasscom Foundation's Women Wizards Unleashed', NASSCOM, 31 January 2025 <https://www.nasscomfoundation.org/blog/diversity-inclusion/empowerher-nasscom-foundations-women-wizards-unleashed>
6   TechUK, 'techUK Renews Support for National InfoSec Gender Diversity Initiative for 2025' <https://www.techuk.org/resource/techuk-renews-support-for-national-infosec-gender-diversity-initiative-for-2025.html>

chapter

Five: Appendix

5

An online survey was fielded to ascertain industry perspectives on women in technology.

The employer survey was fielded by Ipsos to 436 business leaders in December 2024. Survey respondents included head of businesses, business owners, executives, directors and managers. The survey sample only included leaders from large businesses with over 100 employees.

To correct for the skew in industry representation among respondents, responses were weighted to better represent the industry composition of Australian businesses. The adjusted weightings are shown in table A.1.

TABLE A.1: Survey respondents by industry type

Traditional industries: • Agriculture, forestry and fishing • Mining • Manufacturing • Electricity, gas, water and waste services • Construction • Wholesale trade • Transport, postal and warehousing	**24%**	**35%**
Professional services: • Information media and telecommunications • Technology • Financial and insurance services • Professional, scientific and technical services • Administrative and support services • Public administration and safety	**45%**	**28%**
Consumer services: • Retail trade • Accommodation and food services • Rental, hiring and real estate services • Education and training • Healthcare and social assistance • Arts and recreation services • Other services	**31%**	**37%**

CHART A.1: Survey respondents by location of headquarters

38% New South Wales

29% Victoria

15% Queensland

7% Western Australia

6% South Australia

4% Australian Capital Territory

.7% Northern Territory

.5% Tasmania

Technical appendix

Modelling the benefit to women and business

MODELLING METHODOLOGY

This model assumes a scenario where the gap in representation of women in technology halves, from 30% to 39%. Given the current size of the technology workforce, this would represent an additional 137,300 women moving into tech.[1]

The technology workforce is defined as a series of ABS occupation and industry classifications, based on methodology used in the ACS Australia's Digital Pulse.[2] This methodology draws upon definitions and nomenclature developed by Centre for Innovative Industries Economic Research (CIIER) lead researcher Ian Dennis FACS.

Workers with a short-term reskilling pathway was defined using O*NET skill similarity data, which describes how much skills overlap between different occupations.[3] A 60-75% skill similarity between occupations implies a worker could successfully move into that occupation with approximately six months of training.[4] Women in occupations with a 60-75% skill similarity to three or more technology occupations were considered to have a short-term reskilling pathway into the technology workforce.

The wage premium for reskilling into technology was estimated using the difference between women's' average weekly earnings in technology occupations compared to the current occupation of a short-term reskiller.[5] This modelling was done at the occupational level considering the number of women currently employed in each occupation and their average wage. This modelling assumes women will choose to reskill if they expect a long-term wage increase (and excluded women in occupations that currently earn more than the average technology role).

It also assumes that the number of women reskilling out of any given occupation is proportional to the size of the existing women workforce in that occupation.

The medium and large businesses that are expected to hire and benefit from these reskillers includes businesses that have tried to hire technology workers, based on ABS data.[6]

The scale of the benefit is measured by the average wage premium per reskiller and the average additional GOS per worker they are likely to generate compared to their previous occupation.[7] This gain is adjusted for the anticipated loss from women leaving their previous occupation by only including the additional wage and GOS benefit.

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

–   This model assumes a static scenario to demonstrate the possible opportunity in improving the gender balance in tech. Defining a time horizon, measuring the impact of specific policy or business initiatives, and estimating the progressive impact over time is outside the scope of this model.

–   This model does not account for the impact of an improved gender balance on productivity, innovation and customer satisfaction on business performance. This implies the business benefit may be conservative.

–   This model assumes financial incentives are the primary driver of women reskilling into tech. This does not account for other qualitative benefits, such as better working conditions, greater flexibility, or job satisfaction.

1   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), custom data request
2   Deloitte (2024), Australia's Digital Pulse 2024 (report commissioned by Australian Computer Society) <https://www.acs.org.au/campaign/digital-pulse.html>
3   O*net (2022), Related Occupations, <https://www.onetcenter.org/dictionary/29.1/excel/related_occupations.html>
4   Deloitte Access Economics (2021), People powering the future: Skilling Queenslanders for the clean transformation, <https://www.climatecouncil.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/People-Powering-the-Future-report.pdf>
5   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Employee Earnings and Hours, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/labour/earnings-and-working-conditions/employee-earnings-and-hours-australia/latest-release>
6   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2023), Characteristics of Australian businesses <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/industry/technology-and-innovation/characteristics-australian-business/latest-release>
7   Australian Bureau of Statistics (2024), Australian National Accounts: Input Output Tables, <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/economy/national-accounts/australian-national-accounts-input-output-tables/latest-release>
*   In December 2024, the Australian Bureau of Statistics announced that a new occupation classification system OSCA will replace ANZSCO for future publications. At the time of writing this report, the latest available data was presented in ANZSCO terms. As such, this report uses ANZSCO to classify occupations.

RMIT Online Workforce Development

Technology is revolutionising the way businesses operate - across all sectors and functions, the need for upskilling and reskilling is critical. RMIT Online has developed over 80+ courses with leading industry partners like REA Group, Adobe and Amazon Web Services, to be delivered 100% online across workplaces.

Our credentials focus on upskilling employees across a broad scope of topics and industry skills, aligning with key capabilities critical for the future workforce. The programs have been designed to bridge skills gaps, attract and retain talent, and develop leadership potential within organisations. All learning culminates in a certified digital credential demonstrating ability in the skills that matter.

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