

Digital Platform Work in Australia

Findings from a 2023 national survey

2024

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Executive summary

As part of what is often called the “gig economy”, digital platforms such as Uber, Freelancer and Mable can connect workers with individuals or businesses looking to obtain services of various kinds on demand.

This report presents findings from a nationally representative survey undertaken in 2023 on this type of work in Australia. One of the largest of its type anywhere in the world, the survey was a follow-up to a groundbreaking study in 2019, which revealed for the first time how many workers were earning income in this way.¹

¹ McDonald, P., Williams, P., Stewart, A., Mayes, R., & Oliver, D. (2020). *Digital platform work in Australia: Prevalence, nature and impact*. Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Available at <https://eprints.qut.edu.au/203119/>.

Replicating the methodology used in 2019, and drawing on more than 14,600 usable survey responses, the 2023 results reveal that, as in other countries,² participation in digital platform work in Australia has notably increased in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of platforms has grown and the types of work organised and performed in this way continue to diversify.

The great majority of platform work is performed to supplement earnings from other sources, rather than as a sole source of income. However, digital platform workers are increasingly reliant on this additional income.

These and the other findings summarised below reveal the experiences of digital platform workers, including the benefits of such work, as well as the risks and difficulties faced by workers who seek to earn an income through digital labour platforms in Australia.

How prevalent is digital platform work in Australia and how has it changed over time?

The 2019 survey showed that 13.1% of survey respondents had, at some time, undertaken work through a digital platform, and 7.1% of those had done so at the time of the survey or in the previous 12 months.

In 2023, participation rates have almost doubled. 14.1% of survey respondents are currently working (or offering to work) through a digital platform or have done so within the last 12 months.³ A further 10.5% of survey respondents have worked on digital platforms at some time in the past. Compared to 2019 when a total of 13.1% of respondents had undertaken digital platform work, 24.6% of survey respondents in 2023 have done so, either during the 12 months prior to the administration of the survey, or in the past.

Of the 3,590 survey respondents that have at any time undertaken digital platform work, 35.2% have done work only in-person at a specified location, 21.9% have done computer or internet-based work only, while 42.9% have undertaken both types of work. Compared to 2019, there has been an increase in the proportion of digital platform workers doing both in-person and internet-based online work.

² See International Labour Organization (ILO). (2021). *World Employment and Social Outlook 2021: The role of digital labour platforms in transforming the world of work*, International Labour Office, Geneva, pp. 56–7.

³ Throughout the report, “currently” or “current workers” includes work undertaken within the last 12 months.

Who is participating in digital platform work?

Patterns of participation by demographic characteristics are similar to the patterns identified in 2019.

- › Younger people (aged 18-34), males, and students are working through digital platforms in higher proportions than other demographic groups.
- › Women are only half as likely as men to do digital platform work.
- › Respondents with one or more dependents are more likely to be platform workers.
- › Temporary residents reported higher levels of participation in digital platform work, with 60.6% of these respondents having undertaken digital platform work at some time (36.4% currently). Compared to Australian citizens, temporary residents are twice⁴ as likely to be platform workers.
- › Rates of participation in digital platform work have increased across all States and Territories, when compared to 2019 results. In 2023, Victoria (26.5%) and New South Wales (26.7%) have the highest overall levels of participation in digital platform work. The proportion of respondents in Victoria who are current digital platform workers has increased from 7.4% in 2019 to 15.5% in 2023.
- › Increased participation rates were also recorded for people living with a long-term health condition or disability (11.3% are currently undertaking digital platform work, compared to 7.9% in 2019), and for respondents who speak a language other than English at home (23.2% current workers in 2023, compared to 13% in 2019).⁵
- › Respondents who are either casual, permanent part-time or self-employed (but without employees) in their non-platform employment, are more likely to be current platform workers than respondents who have full-time permanent employment.

What digital platforms are currently being used and what type of work is being done?

Almost 140 digital platforms were identified, compared to 102 platforms in 2019. As well as growth in the number of digital platforms on which respondents worked, there have been changes in the types and patterns of work performed.

- › The five most common platforms used by people currently working on digital platforms are Airtasker (33.5%), Uber (26.6%), Doordash (19.8%), UberEats (17.9%) and Amazon Flex (17.1%). In 2019, the top five platforms were Airtasker, Uber, Freelancer, UberEats and Deliveroo.
- › The platforms Deliveroo, Foodora and Taxify were in operation in 2019 but no longer provide services in Australia. However, many new platforms such as AmazonFlex and Doordash have emerged. Eighteen different transport and food delivery platforms were indicated by respondents. In 2019, there were only eight such platforms identified.
- › The most common type of digital platform work undertaken is driving, transport and food delivery. Around one quarter of current workers (26.3%) reported their main platform facilitated this kind of work.

⁴ See Appendix D, Table D.1 for results of multi-nominal logistic regression analysis on participation by various demographic characteristics.

⁵ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were also more likely to participate in digital platform work. However, due to the small number of respondents, results may be subject to higher rates of error.

- › The proportion of current workers doing clerical and data entry work (12.3%), creative and multimedia work (11.5%), care work (11.9%), education (6.7%) and personal services (3.9%) has increased since 2019. These types of digital platform work are not as frequently discussed in debates on the gig economy,⁶ perhaps because they are less visible than driving, transport and food delivery, which have drawn considerable media and scholarly attention.
- › Approximately 70% of current platform workers access work through more than one platform, and 16.8% are registered on five or more platforms. The prevalence of multi-apping has increased since 2019.
- › Platform workers in the 18-34 year age group are most likely to work in transport and food delivery (27.8%), followed by clerical and data entry (14%), creative and multi-media work (12.6%), caring (11.1%) and education (6.4%), where many respondents indicated they are working for platforms providing online tutoring services.
- › Higher proportions of older workers (65+) are providing caring services (21.2%) and professional services (21.2%), with only 9.1% of this group working in transport and food delivery.⁷
- › There is a significantly higher representation of men (compared to women) doing skilled trades work (78.1%) such as qualified carpentry, plumbing or electrical work, and professional services work (72.7%) such as accounting, consulting, legal services or project management. The same is true for driving, transport and food or other delivery services (70.1%), software development or technology services (66.2%), and odd jobs and maintenance (63.7%).
- › Carers are more likely to be women – 60.7% of all current platform workers doing care work are female. Of those working as carers, 40.1% have worked for only one platform.
- › When doing digital platform work, most current platform workers (57.8%) are working from their home either in a dedicated workspace (41.6%) or in a shared living space (16.2%). Consistent with higher levels of participation in driving, transport and food delivery, 19.2% are working in their car or on their bike (compared to 14% in 2019).
- › 71% of current platform workers in Australia are providing services to clients based in Australia only. This has increased from 65% in 2019. A further 22.3% stated that their clients are from both Australia and overseas.
- › Most Australian clients are based in New South Wales (32.9%), Victoria (28.1%) and Queensland (19.2%).
- › When asked how they would categorise their work status on their main digital platform, 65.4% of current workers report being a self-employed contractor or freelancer. In contrast, over a quarter (26.4%) of respondents consider themselves an employee of their main platform and 8.2% do not know.

6 McDonald, P., Williams, P. & Mayes, R. (2021). Means of control in the organisation of digitally intermediated care work. *Work, Employment & Society*, 35(5), 872-890.

7 Note that only 1.7% of all current workers are in this age category (65+).

What income is earned by working through digital platforms?

Overall, it appears that estimated hourly rates of pay for digital platform workers in Australia in 2023 have improved when compared to 2019. However, digital platform workers in 2023 are more heavily reliant on the income to meet their basic needs. At the same time, payment for work completed is sometimes unreliable.

- › Current platform workers are commonly paid per completed task or job (60.1%), rather than for the time or hours they work (24.2%). This is consistent with 2019 results.
- › Digital platform work provides the total income of 3.6% of current platform workers. While still low, this is higher than in 2019 when 2.7% of respondents derived 100% of their income from digital platform work.
- › Women are slightly more likely than men to earn 100% of their income from digital platform work⁸. Compared to other types of work, it is also more common for platform workers doing care work (6.7%) and software development and technology work (5.2%) to earn 100% of their income from digital platform work.
- › 82.4% of current digital platform workers report that their platform earnings make up less than half of their total annual income. This suggests that digital platform work is additional or supplementary to a primary source of income.
- › Digital platform work provides an additional and important source of income for most platform workers. Almost one third (28.9%) consider the income they earn from platform work to be “essential for meeting their basic needs” and a further 29.4% say it is an “important part of overall income, but not essential”. These figures have increased from 15.4% and 24.5% respectively in 2019. In 2019, 52.3% considered the income “nice to have but can live without it”, compared to 38% in 2023. This overall higher reliance on the income from digital platform work suggests that more people may be turning to digital platform work in response to rising prices and cost of living pressures.
- › Those most likely to say that digital platform work is essential for meeting basic needs are respondents living with a disability, unemployed respondents, and those doing care work or offering personal services. Care workers are also more likely than platform workers doing other types of work to derive 100% of their income from digital platform work.
- › In 2019, many current workers (40%) reported that they did not know how much they earned per hour. This improved only slightly in 2023, where 36.7% said they “do not know” how much they earn per hour. Consequently, estimated average hourly rates should be interpreted with caution.
- › Of the current workers who did estimate their income, the average estimated hourly rate from platform work is \$31.99 per hour (pre-tax). This estimated pre-tax amount encompasses payments for work undertaken at any time, including late nights or weekends. Work-related expenses and costs incurred by platform workers are also not reflected in this aggregate hourly estimate. The National Minimum Wage at the time of the survey was \$23.23 per hour.

8 p=.857 not significant.

- › Workers doing clerical and data entry or writing and translation are most likely to be in the lower income bands (\$0.01-\$9.99 per hour) and workers offering professional services work are more likely to be in the highest income band (\$100+ per hour). Median and mean hourly rates, however, suggest a wide variance between the highest and lowest hourly rates earned in these types of work.
- › When compared to 2019, mean estimated hourly pay rates have increased across all types of platform work, except for creative and multimedia, and sales and marketing support.⁹ For example, skilled trades earn an estimated average \$45.00 per hour, compared to an estimated \$30.00 per hour in 2019. There are no significant differences between the estimated hourly earnings of men and women.
- › Current workers doing transport and food or other delivery work are most likely to be in the \$15-\$19.99 or \$20-29.99 income bands. These workers also report the lowest average hourly rate (\$25.51 per hour), suggesting there is very little variance in hourly rates between workers in this type of work. As one point of comparison, at the time of the survey the minimum hourly rate in the *Road Transport and Distribution Award 2020* was \$23.89 per hour,¹⁰ or \$29.86 per hour for casual employees.
- › In addition to their income, 25.4% have received monetary bonuses from their main digital platform, 18% have received allowances to cover work related expenses, and 14% have received vouchers, gift cards or products, or a reduction in the fees they pay to the platform.
- › To earn an income, current platform workers are also required to pay for a range of work-related expenses, including fuel (44.6%), certifications such as police checks or professional memberships (30.3%), or insurance costs (26.5%). These expenses would further reduce average earnings.
- › While 36.7% are provided with at least one type of work-related insurance by the platform, 20.6% do not know if they receive insurance through the platform. The remaining 42.7% do not get insurance from their platform.
- › 40% of current workers are charged a fee by the platform to register to access work, 34.7% are charged to access priority work opportunities and almost half (48.6%) have to pay the platform a percentage of what they earn.
- › Difficulties in receiving payment for their work have been experienced by more than half of current and past platform workers, with delayed payments the most common problem (66.4% of current workers and 61.7% of past workers).

⁹ Average hourly rates should be viewed with caution given they are estimates only and given the high proportion of respondents who could not provide an estimate and answered “I don’t know”.

¹⁰ Transport Worker Grade 1, Ordinary hours, Full-time and part-time transport employees – other than shift workers. Refer: https://library.fairwork.gov.au/award/?krn=ma000038#_Toc141282423.

Frequency and duration of participation in platform work

In 2023, more individuals in Australia are doing platform work and they are doing so more often.

- › Of respondents currently working on digital platforms, 44.4% began in the last 12 months while only 8.1% have been working through platforms for more than 5 years.
- › Compared to 2019, the number of current platform workers participating at least a few times per week (27.5% in 2019) has increased to 36.7%. A further 22.3% engage about once per week and 14.1% do platform work daily.¹¹
- › Sales and marketing support workers are more likely than other work types to indicate they work daily. Driving and transport workers are more likely to indicate they work “at least a few times a week”, while professional services workers work less often.
- › Of the people in Australia who are currently undertaking digital platform work, only 3.0% are working more than 35 hours per week on average across all their platforms. A further 4.5% spend 26-35 hours per week. 34.5% of current platform workers report spending less than 5 hours per week working or offering services through all platforms with which they engage.
- › The average weekly hours that current digital platform workers spend doing paid work through their main platform is 11.9 hours. This is a slight increase from 10 hours per week in 2019. In both time periods, however, around a third of respondents (30.3% in 2023; 37.5% in 2019) did not know how many hours they spent doing platform work.¹²
- › The highest average weekly hours spent on paid work on their main digital platform are in skilled trades (15.6 hours per week), professional services (14.2 hours), and sales and marketing support workers (14.2 hours).
- › An average of 7.3 hours per week is spent on unpaid platform activities designed to obtain work, such as updating profiles, quoting, searching, and bidding for work, through the main digital platform. This estimation compares to 4.9 hours in 2019.¹³

How was participation in digital platform work impacted by the pandemic?

Both past and current digital platform workers were asked how their digital platform work in 2020-2021 was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall, responses suggest that people in Australia turned to digital platforms as a source of income during the pandemic, either starting platform work for the first time or, if they were already a platform worker, working more hours.

- › 33.8% of current platform workers and 40.4% of past platform workers at the time of the 2023 survey reported that they did not do any platform work during 2020–2021. A further 18.3% of current workers and 17.3% of past workers indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had no impact on their digital platform work.

¹¹ “Daily” was not an answer option in 2019.

¹² The wording of this question was varied slightly between 2019 and 2023. Refer to the section titled *Time spent doing paid platform work* in the report for more information.

¹³ The wording of this question was also varied slightly between 2019 and 2023, and in both years, close to 40% of respondents answered “I don’t know”.

- › Of current platform workers who were impacted by the pandemic, 24.2% started doing platform work, and 9.2% worked more hours than previously. In contrast, 5.3% worked less hours, and 3.8% completely stopped doing platform work during 2020–2021. 4.0% worked more hours on one platform but less on another, and 1.1% were impacted in other ways.
- › Of respondents who are no longer doing platform work but were doing so at the time of the COVID pandemic in 2020–2021, 17.4% started platform work because of COVID-related reasons. A further 7.8% were already doing platform work but took on more hours, most commonly (45.5%) because they “needed the money”. Fewer past workers stopped work (6.5%) or reduced their hours (4.7%) because of COVID.
- › Current platform workers who started work during the pandemic, or worked more hours, did so because they “needed the money” (52.8%) or, to a lesser extent, because they were “free to do more work” (28.9%).
- › Driving, transport and food delivery is the largest work category (26.9%) of current workers to report that they started platform work because of COVID. Software engineering and technology work was the most common category of work where work hours increased.
- › In relation to current workers, men were more likely than women to work more hours during the pandemic than prior to it. When compared to other types of work, those who worked more hours because they “needed the money” were most likely to be doing care work, transport and food delivery, or odd jobs and maintenance.
- › Digital platform workers doing skilled trades work were up to 4 times more likely than respondents doing other types of work to report that they stopped doing platform work during COVID.
- › Skilled trades workers, along with writing and translation workers, were up to 5 times more likely than platform workers doing other types of work, to work less on one platform and more on another for COVID-related reasons. This may suggest that skilled trades workers in particular moved to other types of digital platform work during COVID.
- › People living with a disability or a long-term health condition were the most likely group to stop doing platform work as a result of COVID. Reasons for working fewer hours or stopping work varied widely.

Motivations and experiences of doing digital platform work

The survey provides revealing insights about the benefits and challenges associated with digital platform work.

- › Current workers indicated that the strongest motivations for starting platform work were “working the hours I choose”, “earning extra money”, and “working in a place that I choose”. “Earning extra money” was also the strongest motivator for past platform workers.
- › Along with other factors relating to flexibility and enjoyment of work, women current workers were more likely than men to start platform work because it was a financial necessity, to earn extra money, to find regular work, or to find work that accommodated caring responsibilities.
- › Current platform workers are most satisfied with dimensions of platform work that relate to their autonomy to make decisions about how and when they work, including working the hours they choose, making their own decisions about planning or scheduling work, and being their “own boss”.

- › Current workers are least satisfied with dimensions connected to accessing work, earning an income, or social aspects of their work. This includes earning a fair income, the fees and costs of the platform, and having a chance to meet or get to know others at work.
- › Current platform workers were asked if they had read the terms and conditions of their main platform. Most (82.4%) current platform workers reported that they had done so, although 48.2% of those had only “skim read them”. Over 10% of current workers had not read the terms and conditions. Over a quarter of those that had read the terms and conditions said they understood them only “a little” (24.1%) or “not at all” (2.2%).
- › Approximately one third (29.9%) of current workers have at least once been removed from a digital platform or had their access to work opportunities restricted. This figure was slightly higher than for past workers (27.9%).
- › One quarter (25.9%) of current workers and 19.2% of past workers indicated they have been involved in a complaint or dispute while working through digital platforms. Complaints or disputes most commonly involved a client rather than the platform solely and, were most likely to be about money or (delayed/non) payments.
- › The majority of current and past workers who have experienced a complaint or dispute did not seek advice from another party such as a trade union, small business commission or government helpline. 64.7% of current workers and 48.3% of past workers said that the complaint or dispute was mostly handled through a formal process organised by the platform.
- › Relatively few current platform workers are members of a trade union (15.6%) or other association representing platform workers (15.0%). 47.7% of current workers reported never having spoken with other platform workers about their pay and conditions.
- › Over 20% of current workers have experienced work conditions that risked their health or safety at least a few times, with a further 16.2% experiencing health and safety risks at least once. Current workers also reported that at least once, if not a few times or often, they have experienced sexual harassment by a client (25.3%). 28.2% have experienced race-related harassment by a client, and 35.1% bullying by a client. Similar results were reported by past workers.
- › Past platform workers discontinued platform work for a variety of reasons. The reason “pay was too low” ranked marginally highest in importance when compared to other reasons.
- › Over half of respondents noted that they stopped platform work because they found non-platform work. Of those, around half (49.8%) felt that their platform work “somewhat” helped them to find non-platform work, but less than 20% (18.8%), believed it helped them “a great deal”. This was especially so for care workers and those doing personal services work or software development. Around a third of workers in odd jobs and maintenance (33.0%), education (31.9%), writing and translation (33.9%) and driving, transport and delivery work (30.4%) said it did not help at all.

Gendered patterns of participation

Ongoing gendered dimensions of digital platform work emerge within the survey results.

- › Men are significantly more likely than women to work on digital platforms. Women continue to be only half as likely as men to take up platform work.
- › Similar to patterns in the broader labour market, gender stratification was evident by type of work. The majority of digital platform care workers (60.7%) are women. Males are more likely than women to undertake digital platform work in traditionally male-dominated sectors, such as skilled trades (78.1%), professional services (72.7%), transport and food delivery (70.1%), software development and technology (66.2%), and odd jobs and maintenance (63.7%).
- › There are no significant differences between the estimated work hours or hourly earnings of men and women. There are however slightly higher proportions of women (5.7%) compared to men (3.5%) in the lower income bands of \$0.01-\$9.99, and \$10.00-\$14.99 (5.0% women and 3.0% men), and women are more likely than male platform workers to say that they have received no additional benefits associated with their platform work, such as monetary bonuses, gift cards or discounted fees.
- › Women, however, are more likely than men to be satisfied with aspects of their digital platform work including the ability to work from a place of their choosing and the ability to set the price for their services.
- › During the height of the pandemic, men were more likely than women to work more hours on platforms than pre-COVID.
- › Overall, gender is a statistically significant factor in the likelihood of participating in gig work, the types of work undertaken, the motivations for commencing gig work, the likelihood of receiving benefits and the levels of satisfaction with gig work.

Beyond digital platform work - Other ways of earning money in the digital economy

Beyond working, respondents reported using digital platforms to earn money through selling property, licensing creative work, renting out premises or leasing out other assets they own. Overall, the prevalence of earning money in multiple ways through platforms has increased.

- › More than half (55%) of all survey respondents (8052 of 14608) have earned money in some way through digital platforms, either by working and/or by selling, licensing or renting out property.
- › The proportion of people who do not do digital platform work, but currently earn an income in other ways (selling, licensing or renting out) through digital platforms has increased from 25.2% in 2019 to 30.6% in 2023.
- › The most common approach to earning money (excluding working) through digital platforms is selling or licensing products or one's own possessions through online marketplaces (46.2%), followed by renting out premises (15.2%) and, to a lesser extent, leasing out other property (9.1%) such as car parks, campervans, toys, tools or dresses.
- › Current digital platform workers who are also earning money by selling, licensing or renting out property through digital platforms are more likely to be doing caring, clerical and data entry, or personal services work, compared to other types of work.



1 Introduction

Digital platforms connect workers, or people seeking to earn money, with individuals or businesses that require goods or services on demand. The work completed is usually a one-off, short-term, task-based job, often referred to as a “gig”. As is the case globally, the gig economy in Australia has been operating for over a decade, with the flagship digital platform Uber launching in Australia in 2012.¹⁴ The gig economy may offer benefits of a competitive market and convenient access to services for consumers. However, workers who are independent contractors have fewer rights and protections when compared to workers in more conventional forms of employment.

¹⁴ The terms “gig work” and “the gig economy” can sometimes be used more broadly to refer to any kind of system for performing work on demand. But in this report we generally use these terms to denote work sought, offered and obtained through digital platforms.

In 2019, the Victorian Government commissioned the first nationally representative survey to map the prevalence, nature and impact of the gig economy in Australia. That survey found that 13.1% of respondents had, at some time, undertaken work through a digital platform, and 7.1% of those were working through digital platforms at the time of the survey or had been in the 12 months prior. Australia's participation in digital platform work in 2019 was relatively similar to other developed economies globally. The detailed findings, available in the report "Digital Platform Work in Australia: Prevalence, Nature and Impact",¹⁵ informed the Victorian On-Demand Workforce Inquiry, and the subsequent development of Voluntary Fair Conduct and Accountability Standards.¹⁶

This report presents findings from a follow-up Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey, conducted in 2023. This survey, informed by the 2019 survey and current research, provides the first insights into how participation in digital platform work in Australia has changed over time.

The project

Global research on the gig economy has demonstrated growth in different types of digital platform work, and uncovered changes in patterns of participation and the conditions of work experienced by digital platform workers, particularly during and following the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷

To understand how patterns of participation in Australia have changed over time, and in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Victorian Government in 2023 engaged a team of university researchers to conduct a second national survey exploring digital platform work in Australia.

The team comprised researchers involved in the 2019 survey, Associate Professor Penny Williams (QUT), Professor Andrew Stewart (University of Adelaide), Professor Paula McDonald (QUT), and Professor Robyn Mayes (QUT), alongside new team member, Associate Professor Trish Obst (QUT) and research assistants from QUT, Catherine Kennon, Alicia Feldman and Phuong Anh Tran. The project team had the support and collaboration of staff from Industrial Relations Victoria, including Sharon De Silva and Hugh Horsfall.

Research objectives

The objectives of the research were to:

- 1 understand the characteristics of digital platform work in Australia and experience of digital platform workers in 2023;
- 2 compare how participation in, and the characteristics of, digital platform work in Australia have changed over time; and
- 3 explore the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on digital platform work in Australia.

¹⁵ McDonald et al., above, n. 1.

¹⁶ Available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/inquiry-on-demand-workforce>.

¹⁷ ILO, above, n. 2.

The survey provides insights into the characteristics and experiences of those participating in digital platform work in 2023, including the extent to which they combine digital platform work with other forms of paid work, and how patterns of participation have changed since 2019. It also explores emerging questions about gendered patterns of participation in digital platform work.¹⁸

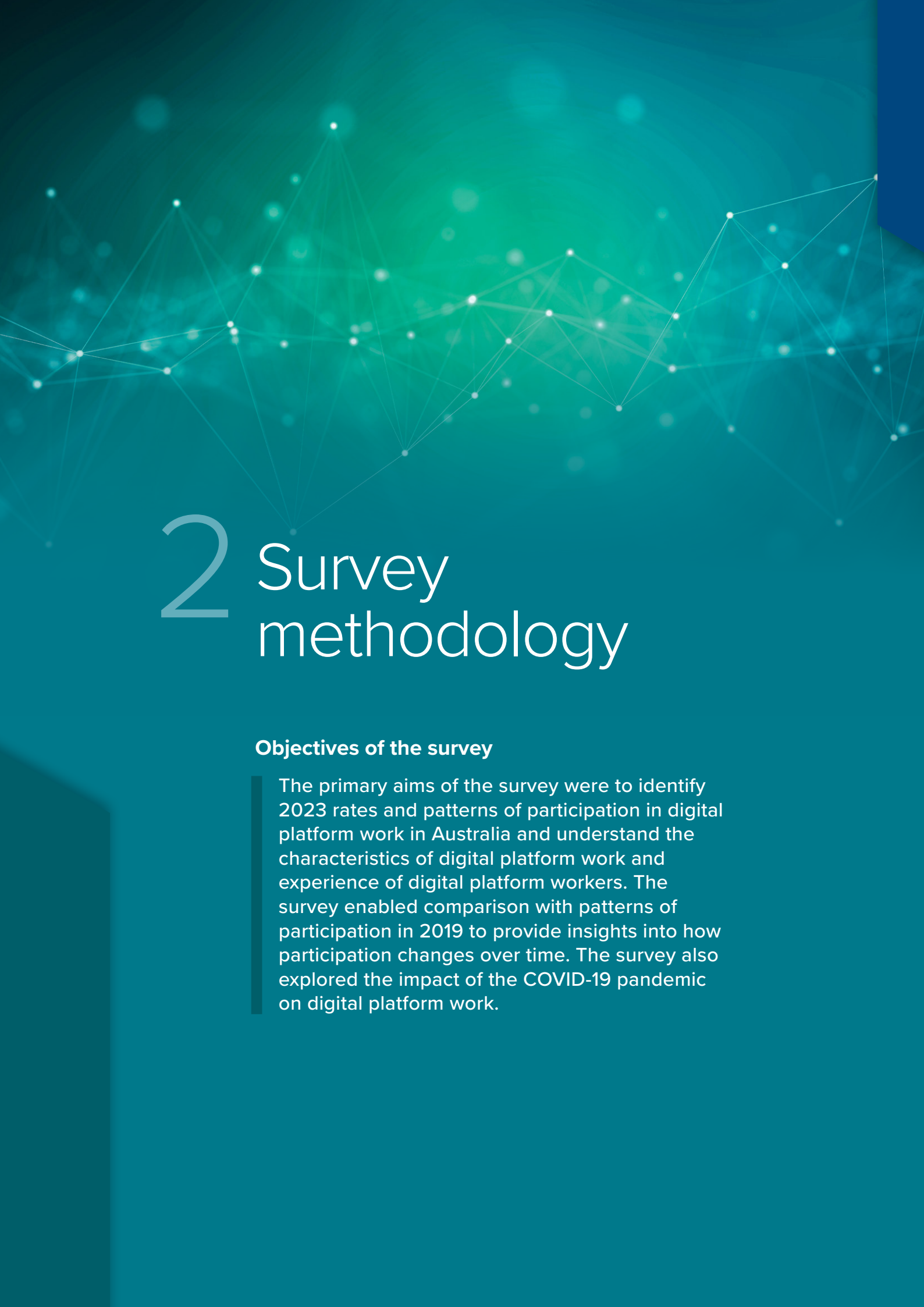
The 2023 survey focussed on digital platform work and excluded questions about consumption through digital platforms which were included in the 2019 survey.

Overview of the report

The remainder of this report is structured as follows. Part 2 describes the methods used to design, implement and analyse the survey responses. Parts 3 to 8 present the results of the survey. Part 3 addresses the prevalence and patterns of digital platform work in Australia. Part 4 presents findings in relation to current participation in digital platform work. Part 5 reports the impact of COVID on digital platform work. Part 6 reports past participation in digital platform work. Part 7 summarises data on gendered participation in digital platform work. Part 8 provides an overview of other ways of earning money in the digital platform economy. The Conclusion in Part 9 canvasses the implications of findings from the survey.



¹⁸ See Churchill, B. & Craig, L. (2019). Gender in the gig economy: Men and women using digital platforms to secure work in Australia. *Journal of Sociology*, 55(4), 741-761; Williams P., Mayes, R., Khan, M.H., Obst, P. & McDonald P. (2021). *Gendered dimensions of digital platform work: A literature review and new findings*. Prepared for Dept of Premier and Cabinet, Victoria.



2 Survey methodology

Objectives of the survey

The primary aims of the survey were to identify 2023 rates and patterns of participation in digital platform work in Australia and understand the characteristics of digital platform work and experience of digital platform workers. The survey enabled comparison with patterns of participation in 2019 to provide insights into how participation changes over time. The survey also explored the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on digital platform work.

Research strongly suggests that participation in digital platform work is irregular, with workers moving in and out of digital platform work over time. Hence, this survey sought to understand patterns of participation by identifying two respondent groups: firstly, those who are currently engaged in digital platform work or have done so within the last 12 months, and secondly, workers who have previously participated in digital platform work (more than 12 months ago) but are no longer doing platform work.

Consistent with the 2019 survey, respondents were asked if they had earned or attempted to earn an income through digital platforms. This included income derived from work that is either internet-based or performed at a specific location, or from selling, renting out or licensing goods or other property.

Respondents who had worked or offered services through digital platforms more than 12 months ago, but not recently – past workers – were asked questions in relation to the specific platforms they used: when they first started, how often they provided services, the income they earned, the impact of the pandemic, and reasons for stopping digital platform work.

Respondents who had performed platform work within the last 12 months – current workers – were the primary focus of the survey and answered the most questions, both in relation to their main platform as well as other platforms if they worked on multiple platforms. The period of 12 months for current platform workers was chosen to reflect recent experience with platform work and to support accurate recall from respondents when answering the survey questions. Current workers answered questions about offering or providing services in relation to:

- › the specific platforms through which they had sought or provided work
- › the kind of work they most commonly offered or performed
- › how long ago they first started and how often they engaged with platforms
- › how many hours per week they spent undertaking paid work and unpaid tasks
- › the income they earned
- › the basis for payment by the platform
- › their motivations for deciding to work or offer services
- › the operations of the platform
- › the location of clients and where tasks were completed
- › their satisfaction with aspects of the work
- › if they had been involved in any form of dispute with the platform or with clients

Current workers were also provided the opportunity to answer free-text questions about their experiences.

Background demographics were collected for all survey respondents, including those who did not earn an income through digital platform work. This included age, employment status, occupation, industry, gender, postcode, highest level of education, household type and number of dependants, taxable income, Australian residency status, whether they speak a language other than English at home, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status, and disability status.

Definition of digital platform work

For the purposes of the survey, the research team defined five categories that reflected how respondents may have interacted with, and earned an income through, digital platforms:

- 1 **Selling** products or possessions, or licensing creative works, through online marketplaces.
- 2 **Renting** out premises to someone else through digital platforms.
- 3 **Leasing** out a campervan, parking space, car (but not driving it) or other goods such as tools, toys or dresses, to someone else through digital platforms.
- 4 **Working or offering services** through digital platforms where the platform matches the worker with a client and where the worker is paid via the platform and the work is performed IN PERSON, at a SPECIFIED LOCATION, rather than via the internet.
- 5 **Working or offering services** through digital platforms, where the platform matches the worker with a client and where the worker is paid via the platform, but the work is COMPUTER OR INTERNET-BASED, rather than done at a specific location.

The survey specifically asks about “offering their services” to acknowledge that some platform workers may have sought work and offered their labour or services through digital platforms, but not actually obtained work at the time of the survey. The experiences of these respondents are of equal interest.

As indicated earlier, respondent demographic data was collected across all five categories. However, only respondents who indicated that they had “worked or offered services” (categories 4 and 5) answered additional survey questions in relation to their experiences. Part 8 of the report provides a summary of the prevalence of participation and demographic characteristics of respondents who had earned an income through selling, licensing or renting out property (categories 1, 2 and 3).

To avoid the potential risk of panel participants perceiving the completion of the online survey as “digital platform work”, or of respondents answering questions in relation to activities undertaken on platforms on behalf of their usual employer, we included the following statement:

For the purposes of this survey, please do NOT include the completion of online surveys like this one in any of your responses. Also, please do NOT include use of digital platforms on behalf of your employer or organisation. We are interested in personal participation only.

Target population and sample

The target number of responses was between 14,000 and 15,000. As digital platform work requires access to the internet, the population of interest was adult Australian internet users over 18 years of age. The sample was constructed to be nationally representative using Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS, June 2022)¹⁹, stratified according to gender, age and State/Territory. The Online Research Unit (ORU), an Australian-based online research panel provider that facilitated the 2019 survey, provided the sample.

¹⁹ Table 8 estimated resident population, by age and sex, as at 30 June 2022: <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/population/national-state-and-territory-population/dec-2022>.

The most commonly used nonprobability sampling method which best replicates probability methods is quota sampling.²⁰ Quota matching identifies important groups in the population which are related to the outcome measures. These groups are then sampled using convenience sampling and the composition of the groups is fixed to be proportional to known totals of these groups in the population.²¹ Quota sampling is preferable to other types of non-probability sampling, however it is still limited by selection bias.²² While selection biases within groups are assumed not to have an effect on the inference, as a nonprobability method it is acknowledged that biases do remain which may impact on parameter estimates²³ and, in this study, contribute to some overestimation of participation rates in digital platform work. While randomisation in probability sampling methods protects against these biases, sampling errors still exist which may be compounded when response rates are low. As such, utilising a quota approach was selected as the most cost effective and reliable sampling strategy that could be employed to address the aims of this research project. The use of stringent demographic quotas provided high quality data and insights on the characteristics and patterns of participation of digital platform workers presented here.

Acknowledged limitations of online surveys include that some respondents may falsify their demographic information and coverage error, which is the difference between the defined target population of interest and the population frame used for the study.²⁴ That is, it cannot be known for certain whether the survey respondents were equally, more, or less likely to have participated in digital platform work than if an alternative sampling frame had been adopted (for example, a household survey). Online surveys are also subject to mischievous responders and bots that can threaten the integrity of research data and have the potential to distort research findings.²⁵ Bots are computer programmes created to automate tasks, such as complete a survey. Mischievous responders are survey participants who intentionally mislead researchers by providing false data. Both are motivated by the incentives promised by survey providers.²⁶ The ORU²⁷ adopts a range of strategies to mitigate these general limitations of panel surveys and to ensure the integrity of its research panel. These strategies include employing multiple validation checks, adopting a “one invite, one survey” policy and predominantly recruiting offline, sending incentives and participation rewards only by post which facilitates location accuracy and validated, genuine respondents. Further strategies to enhance representativeness and ensure validity of the data were implemented by the project team following data collection. These additional strategies are described in the section titled *Field work and data collection* below.

- 20 Callegaro, M., Baker, R. P., Bethlehem, J., Göritz, A. S., Krosnick, J. A., & Lavrakas, P. J. (Eds.). (2014). Online panel research: A data quality perspective. John Wiley & Sons.
- 21 Hibberts, M., Burke Johnson, R., Hudson, K. (2012). Common Survey Sampling Techniques. In: Gideon, L. (eds) Handbook of Survey Methodology for the Social Sciences. Springer, New York, NY. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4614-3876-2_5.
- 22 Cornesse, C., Blom, A.G., Dutwin, D., Krosnick, J.A., De Leeuw, E.D., Legleye, S., Pasek, J., Pennay, D., Phillips, B., Sakshaug, J.W., Struminskaya, B., Wenz, A. (2020) A Review of Conceptual Approaches and Empirical Evidence on Probability and Nonprobability Sample Survey Research, *Journal of Survey Statistics and Methodology*, 8(1), 4–36, <https://doi.org/10.1093/jssam/smz041>.
- 23 Yang, K., & Banamah, A. (2014). Quota Sampling as an Alternative to Probability Sampling? An Experimental Study. *Sociological Research Online*, 19(1), 56-66. <https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.3199>.
- 24 Couper, M. P. (2000). Web surveys: A review of issues and approaches. *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 64(4), 464-494.
- 25 Zhang, Z., Zhu, S., Mink, J., Xiong, A., Song, L., & Wang, G. (2022). Beyond bot detection: Combating fraudulent online survey takers. *Proceedings of the ACM Web Conference 2022*, Virtual Event, Lyon, France.
- 26 Simone, M., Cascalheira, C. J., & Pierce, B. G. (2023). A quasi-experimental study examining the efficacy of multimodal bot screening tools and recommendations to preserve data integrity in online psychological research. *The American Psychologist*.
- 27 The ORU is ISO 20252 accredited, are members of AMSRO and carry the Privacy Trustmark.

Instrument design

In early 2023, the research team, in collaboration with staff from Industrial Relations Victoria, prepared a draft survey instrument. The 2023 survey was based largely on the survey administered in 2019 with some agreed enhancements to focus on platform work, as opposed to consumption or other ways of earning an income through digital platforms. These enhancements included removal of all questions relating to consumption through digital platforms and removal of the detailed questions on selling, licensing or renting out property through digital platforms that appeared in the 2019 survey. Informed by recent research on the experiences of digital platform workers globally,²⁸ the 2023 survey incorporated new questions exploring the experience of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, experiences of bullying, harassment or unsafe practices, and complaints or disputes, including in relation to payments. Both the 2019 and 2023 surveys were informed by prior research and similar surveys undertaken in Europe,²⁹ yet took into account Australia's distinctive workplace relations frameworks.

The online survey was designed using Qualtrics survey software, branded as a university research survey, hosted on a secure Qualtrics server through the QUT account and distributed by ORU.

Cognitive testing of the draft online instrument was conducted in August 2023 using 10 volunteers from the researchers' networks who had participated in a range of different types of platform work, and/or were familiar with the experiences of platform workers. The purpose of this testing was to check the programming and flow of the online survey, identify errors, and estimate completion times. Following this initial testing, minor changes to the survey design were made, including simplification of some questions; the addition of tester-identified platforms and answer options; correction of spelling errors; and adjustments to the inbuilt survey logic. Changes were designed to maximise participation by simplifying and improving the survey experience.

On 15 August 2023, with the assistance of ORU, the project team distributed the online survey to an initial 200-300 participants as a "soft" launch to test the final survey changes and ensure the approach to the distribution of the survey and associated links were working as anticipated. This test provided 287 responses and no substantial changes were made to the questionnaire on that basis.

The final questionnaire administered for the research is provided in Appendix A.

Field work and data collection

The survey received QUT Human Research Ethics Approval [No. 7033] in June 2023, and was formally launched online on 18 August 2023. Australians registered with ORU over the age of 18 were invited to take part in the survey. Survey respondents were asked an initial question to gain their consent to participate, followed by further questions to determine their age, gender, and location. Respondents who stated that they were aged under 18 or 75 years or over were subsequently screened out. Survey responses were monitored daily to check age, gender, and location targets against Australian Demographic Statistics (ABS, June 2022). The survey was closed on 27 September 2023.

28 Fairwork. (2020). *The gig economy and Covid-19: Fairwork report on platform policies*. Oxford, United Kingdom.; ILO, above, n. 2.

29 The COLLEEM survey covers 14 EU Member States: Germany, Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Slovakia, Hungary, Sweden, United Kingdom, Croatia, France, Romania, Lithuania, Italy, Portugal.

In total, 20,815 panel members were invited to participate in the survey. Of these, 1503 declined consent to take part in the survey after reading the introductory information page. An additional 4704 respondents were screened out due to: being outside the 18-74 age range (483 respondents); not providing their age (1070); having already reached the desired quota for their stratum (1683); duplicate values (408); incomplete responses (431); insufficient effort (515); missing and designated IDs (15); having a high recapture score (75); or evidence of mischievous responses (24) (see Appendix B).

There were 14,608 usable responses, which included valid answers to whether the respondent had earned money through digital platforms and essential demographic information (age, gender, State/Territory). The sample is broadly representative by gender, age and State/Territory.

The sample was further divided into respondents who indicated they were currently undertaking digital platform work or had done so in the past 12 months (“current platform workers”), and those respondents who were not currently working through digital platforms but had previously undertaken platform work more than 12 months ago (“past platform workers”). These two groups answered a common set of questions as well as additional questions that were distinctive for each group. Responses from past platform workers are presented in Part 6. The focus of the survey analysis was on current platform workers, as set out in Part 4. Responses to individual questions have a variable number of responses due to some respondents choosing not to answer a particular question or selecting “prefer not to answer”.

Part 8 reports on the demographic characteristics of respondents who had earned an income through selling, licensing or renting out property. It is acknowledged that earning money in these ways may also involve aspects of work such as cleaning premises that are being rented out, or preparing creative works for online distribution. However, for the purposes of this study, those performing such activities were distinguished from the primary group of interest – those who offer their services (labour) for hire through digital platforms.

The total sample slightly overrepresented respondents with a university qualification and underrepresented respondents with no post-school qualification. The survey also slightly overrepresented respondents living in major cities and underrepresented respondents in remote areas.

Given that highest education level and remoteness (along with age, gender and State/Territory) are known correlates of internet usage,³⁰ we calculated weights to adjust the sample to take into account highest education level as well as gender, age and State/Territory in order to compare weighted and unweighted proportions of participation levels (see Appendix C). Only small differences (less than 1% on all measures of participation) were found between the weighted sample and the unweighted sample. Hence, for ease of interpretation, unweighted results have been presented throughout this report.

Qualitative responses

A number of survey items allowed respondents to either select from pre-existing categories or choose “other” and enter a free text response. In each of these cases, the free text responses were sorted and compared against the analytic categories in the 2019 survey.

30 Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). (2018). Household use of information technology, Australia, 2016-17, Cat. no. 8146.0. ABS: Canberra, Table 1.

Where similar to an existing category, the response was counted against that category; where the response was incomplete or not a valid response to the question, it was excluded; and where valid and unique, it was counted as “other”. Where unique responses were given by multiple respondents, a new category was developed.

For example, where a respondent used the “other” category to specify a platform which was on the provided platform list, the results from that respondent were aggregated with those who selected the platform from the pre-defined list. Internet searches were conducted to confirm that all nominated platforms were genuine platforms. These were either counted in the response code “other”, or if they appeared 5 or more times, were indicated as a distinct platform.

Where survey items provided for free text responses without pre-existing categories, responses to these items were coded to identify common themes that are presented throughout the report.





3 Prevalence and patterns of digital platform work in Australia

Part 3 presents findings on the extent to which survey respondents in Australia have offered services or undertaken work through digital platforms either currently or in the past. Throughout, “current workers” or “current participation” refers to those who have participated in digital platform work within the past 12 months, including at the time of the survey. “Past workers” are those who have previously earned an income working through a platform but have not done so within the past 12 months.

The findings address the following research questions:

- 1 What are the current levels of participation in digital platform work and how do they compare to 2019?
- 2 What demographic patterns are evident in participation in digital platform work?
- 3 How has participation in digital platform work changed over time (since 2019)?

Changing participation - Prevalence of working through digital platforms

Of those surveyed, 24.6% indicated that they have, at some time, participated in digital platform work and 14.1% of those respondents are currently offering services through digital platforms or have done so within the last 12 months. This is a notable increase from participation rates reported in 2019 (see Table 1 below), which were 13.1% and 7.1% respectively. Of the 14,608 respondents, 10.5% have undertaken digital platform work in the past, but are not currently doing so. The majority (75.4%) of survey respondents have never participated in digital platform work of any kind. The prevalence of digital platform work in Australia has increased substantially since 2019 (Table 1).

Table 1. Current, previous or no engagement with work through digital platforms in 2023 and 2019

Earns income working or offering services through a digital platform	2023		2019	
	N	%	N	%
Has never earned an income working or offering services through a platform	11018	75.4	12186	86.9
Has previously earned an income working or offering services through a platform but not in the last 12 months	1531	10.5	839	6.0
Currently or in the last 12 months has earned an income working or offering services through a platform	2059	14.1	988	7.1
Total	14608	100	14013	100

While there have been relatively few studies that compare participation in the gig economy over time, recent research suggests that the prevalence of digital platform work in Australia is broadly consistent with patterns seen internationally. The total participation rate of 24.6% suggests participation in digital platform work in Australia has almost doubled over the last four years. Similar patterns of increasing participation have been recorded in other parts of the world.³¹ For example, reports suggest that digital platform work in the United Kingdom has almost tripled since 2016,³² and 16% of adults in the United States have earned money through platform work.³³

31 European surveys show an increase in participation in digital platform work within just one year (2017-2018), refer Urzi Brancati, C., Pesole, A., Fernández-Macías, E. *New evidence on platform workers in Europe. Results from the second COLLEEM survey*, EUR 29958 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2020, ISBN 978-92-76-12949-3, doi:10.2760/459278, JRC118570

32 Spencer, N., & Huws, U. (2021). Platformisation and the pandemic: Changes in workers' experiences of platform work in England and Wales, 2016-2021. In *Seven ways platform workers are fighting back* (pp. 9-24). Trades Union Congress.

33 Anderson, M., McClain, C., Faverio, M., & Gelles-Watnick, R. (2021). The state of gig work in 2021, *Pew Research Centre*.

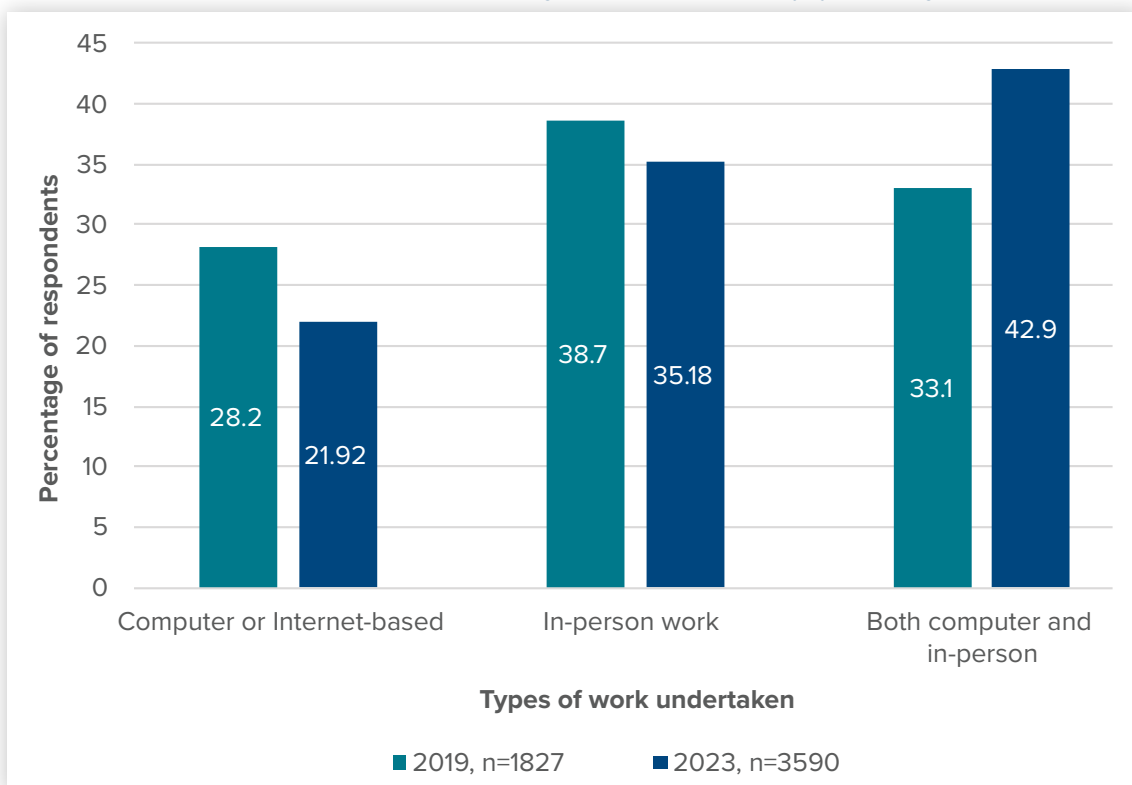
It is important to note that differences in participation rates reported here and in other Australian data largely reflect different methodological approaches, such as different sample populations or survey questions, and variances in survey design. For example, a recent report by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)³⁴ presents data on respondents aged 15 years and older who reported undertaking digital platform work within the prior four weeks. In contrast, the data reported here is derived from adults (18-75 years) who have undertaken digital platform work within the last 12 months or at any time in the past.

Respondents to our survey were asked if the digital platform work they have undertaken (either currently or in the past) was performed in person at a specified location, or was solely internet/computer-based and performed online, or if they have undertaken both types of work.

Figure 1 shows the proportion of workers undertaking different types of work and how it has changed since 2019. Of the 3,590 platform worker respondents, 21.92% said they have done work that was computer or internet-based but *not* in-person work, 35.18% have done in-person work at a specified location but *not* computer or internet-based work, and 42.9% have undertaken *both* types of platform work at some time.

In comparison to 2019, there has been a notable increase in respondents doing both types of work, while doing only one type of work has reduced slightly from 2019 rates.

Figure 1. Participation by type of digital platform work



34 Refer to <https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/digital-platform-workers-australia> for more information on the ABS findings.

Participation in platform work by demographic characteristics

The demographic characteristics of survey respondents who have worked or offered services through digital platforms are provided in Table 2 below. The “No” column in this table represents the proportion of all respondents who have not undertaken digital platform work at any time. This includes respondents who have earned money through selling, licensing or renting out property via platforms such as Gumtree, Airbnb, or iStock, but have not earned an income working through digital platforms.

The results presented in Table 2 show that higher proportions of younger people (aged 18-34) and males work through digital platforms. Participation rates decline in older age groups. These patterns are similar to those recorded in 2019. High proportions of respondents who did not provide their gender or listed their gender as intersex/indeterminate or other, were also recorded. However, as a proportion of all respondents, the number of these respondents were small (n=56, 0.4%).

In terms of location, all States and Territories have recorded increased participation rates. Victoria (26.5%) and New South Wales (26.7%) have the highest overall levels of participation in digital platform work, with Victoria recording slightly higher rates of current platform workers (15.5% Vic, 15.2% NSW). Compared to 2019, the prevalence of current digital platform workers has increased from 7.4% to 15.5% in Victoria. Digital platform work occurs at higher rates in capital cities.

Compared to 2019 (7.9%), higher percentages of people living with a long-term health condition or disability are currently undertaking digital platform work (11.3%), and higher proportions of people who speak a language other than English at home are current platform workers (23.2% in 2023 compared to 13% in 2019). Increased participation rates from 16.9% in 2019 to 32.2% in 2023 were also recorded for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander respondents. However, the number of respondents in this category were small and hence this finding is subject to high margins of error.

Students have higher levels of participation (27.9% currently, 46.1% at any time) than other labour force categories such as unemployed, retired or employed. Higher participation is also recorded by temporary residents, with 60.6% having undertaken digital platform work at some time and 36.4% doing so currently.

While the percentages are higher across most demographic characteristics, the patterns of participation are similar to those reported in 2019.

Table 2. Participation in digital platform work by demographic characteristics (n=14632)

		Have you earned income by working or offering services through digital platforms?			N
		No (%)	Yes, but not in the last 12 months (%)	Yes, currently or within the last 12 months (%)	
Age	18-34	55.8	17.3	26.9	4758
	35-49	75.8	11.0	13.2	4214
	50-64	89.8	5.1	5.1	3739
	65-74	95.5	2.8	1.7	1897
Gender	Female	79.7	9.2	11.2	7431
	Male	71.1	11.7	17.2	7121
	Intersex/Indeterminate	38.9	33.3	27.8	18
	Other	55.0	20.0	25.0	20
	Prefer not to answer	77.8	11.1	11.1	18
State or Territory	Australian Capital Territory	80.8	8.5	10.7	271
	New South Wales	73.2	11.5	15.2	4579
	Northern Territory	75.0	13.9	11.1	144
	Queensland	76.8	10.0	13.3	2934
	South Australia	81.5	7.8	10.7	1044
	Tasmania	77.6	8.1	14.2	295
	Victoria	73.5	11.0	15.5	3773
	Western Australia	78.6	9.5	11.9	1568
Location	Major cities	74.0	10.9	15.1	11547
	Inner regional	80.7	8.7	10.6	2068
	Outer regional	84.3	7.9	7.8	770
	Remote	84.8	8.0	7.1	112
	Very remote	81.3	12.5	6.3	32

		Have you earned income by working or offering services through digital platforms?			N
		No (%)	Yes, but not in the last 12 months (%)	Yes, currently or within the last 12 months (%)	
Living with a disability	No	74.9	10.6	14.5	11752
	Yes	79.6	9.1	11.3	2587
	Prefer not to say	64.8	17.4	17.8	247
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander	Yes	45.4	22.4	32.2	509
	No	76.7	10.0	13.3	13920
	Prefer not to say	67.9	15.7	16.4	159
Non-English speaking background	Yes	61.0	15.7	23.2	2790
	No	79.3	9.0	11.7	11665
	Prefer not to say	50.4	27.1	22.5	129
Highest education level	Some primary school	56.0	20.0	24.0	50
	Some high school	78.4	9.7	11.9	977
	Finished high school	74.4	10.5	15.1	2083
	A certificate (e.g., Trade Certificate, Certificate I-Certificate IV)	78.0	10.3	11.7	2405
	An apprenticeship or traineeship	67.8	13.6	18.7	214
	A Diploma, Advanced Diploma, or Associate Degree	80.5	8.5	11.0	1894
	Bachelor degree	71.3	11.5	17.1	4125
	Postgraduate qualification	76.9	10.1	13.1	2839

		Have you earned income by working or offering services through digital platforms?			N
		No (%)	Yes, but not in the last 12 months (%)	Yes, currently or within the last 12 months (%)	
Labour force status	Employee or self-employed	72.7	11.2	16.3	10243
	Unemployed (or would be unemployed if not for platform work)	65.3	17.3	17.4	556
	Student	53.9	18.2	27.9	620
	Retired	95.9	2.7	1.4	2040
	Full-time homemaker, or unpaid carer	79.5	11.1	9.4	678
	Volunteer	74.1	13.3	12.6	135
	Other, not in the labour force	89.4	6.4	4.2	312
Household status	Single, no children	70.1	12.2	17.7	3852
	Single with at least one child living with you	70.3	13.2	16.6	797
	Single with one or more children, none of whom live with you	83.8	8.6	7.6	733
	Couple without children	71.3	12.2	16.6	2974
	Couple with at least one child living with you	74.7	10.1	15.2	3878
	Couple with children who do not live with you	92.9	4.3	2.8	2048
	Other	81.3	9.2	9.5	262
Australian Residency Status	Australian citizen	78.0	9.4	12.6	12993
	Permanent resident	63.2	16.4	20.1	1000
	Temporary resident	39.4	24.2	36.4	467
	Prefer not to say	52.0	18.9	29.1	127

Note: ** Relative Standard Error > 25% * Relative Standard Error > 10% Unweighted N=14632

Likelihood of participation in platform work

Consistent with the patterns of participation described in Table 2 (demographics), further analysis³⁵ confirms that younger people (18-34 years of age) are significantly more likely to participate in platform work, and that individuals are less likely to participate in platform work if they are older. Results are similar for past platform workers.

Gender is a statistically significant indicator of participation in platform work. Even taking into consideration that in Australia, overall, men have a higher labour market participation rate than women, female respondents are significantly less likely than males to work on digital platforms. Respondents with one or more individuals in their household who are economically dependent on them are significantly more likely to be current (2 times more likely) or former (1.6 times more likely) platform workers.

Higher rates of participation occur in capital cities. Respondents in (inner and outer) regional areas are significantly less likely than those in a major city to be current platform workers.

Respondents are less likely to be current platform workers if they reside in South Australia, the Australian Capital Territory or Western Australia. South Australians are also less likely to have undertaken platform work in the past.

Citizenship status has a large impact on the likelihood of participating in platform work, especially for temporary residents. Relative to Australian citizens, temporary residents are more than twice as likely to be a platform worker (current or past). Permanent residents are also significantly more likely than Australian citizens to be current or former platform workers.

People who speak a language other than English at home, and Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders, are more likely to be current platform workers than respondents without those characteristics. These results were consistent for former platform workers. Results for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders need to be interpreted with caution, however, given the comparatively small number of respondents (n=509).

Although higher levels of education appear to predict participation in platform work, these results need to be interpreted with caution. As noted in the Methodology section, the sample overrepresented respondents with a university qualification and underrepresented respondents with no post-school qualifications.

Labour force status also has an impact on the likelihood of engaging in platform work. Retirees are less likely to be current or past platform workers. Homemakers/carers are half as likely as those with paid employment to be current platform workers. Respondents who would be otherwise unemployed are more likely to have been past platform workers (more than 12 months ago). This may be related to participation in digital platform work during the COVID-19 pandemic (see Part 5).

³⁵ See Appendix D, Table D.1 for results of multi-nominal logistic regression analysis on all characteristics described in this section.

Additional analysis³⁶ examined the influence of respondents' employment status in their non-platform work roles on participation in platform work.

- › Casual and self-employed without employees are around 1.5 times more likely to be current/recent platform workers than full-time permanent employees.
- › Permanent part-time employees are also more likely to be current platform workers.
- › Self-employed respondents with their own employees are around half as likely to have been a platform worker more than 12 months ago.

Further analysis using these demographic characteristics is presented throughout this report.



³⁶ See Appendix D, Table D.2 for results of multi-nominal logistic regression analysis.



4 Current participation in digital platform work

Part 3 summarised the characteristics of survey respondents who indicated that they have at some stage undertaken work through a digital platform. It includes those who are currently working or have recently done so (within the last 12 months), and those who participated at any time prior to 12 months ago.

Part 4 presents the details of participation for *current workers*: that is, respondents who are currently working through digital platforms or have done so within the prior 12-month period. It answers the following research questions in relation to platform work and specifically work on the respondents' *main* platform:

- 1 What are the most common platforms through which platform work is undertaken?
- 2 What are the experiences of current digital platform workers on their main platform?
- 3 What are the payments and earnings for work undertaken through the main platform?
- 4 How much time do workers spend on their main platform?
- 5 What are the operational features of workers' main platforms?
- 6 What is the location of workers and clients on the main platform?
- 7 What are the motivations for doing platform work and how satisfied are workers with aspects of platform work?

Most common platforms

The five most common platforms used by current platform workers within the last 12 months are Airtasker (33.5%), Uber (26.6%), Doordash (19.8%), UberEats (17.9%) and Amazon Flex (17.1%). Airtasker, Uber and UberEats were also in the top 5 most common platforms in 2019. Both Doordash and Amazon Flex launched in Australia after the 2019 survey was conducted and, it seems, have quickly gained popularity.³⁷

Table 3 shows the percentage of current workers who work or offer services through each platform and demonstrates the wide variety of platform businesses through which work can be undertaken. Compared to 2019, current workers nominated a wider variety of platforms. In 2019, workers named 102 platforms they used to find work (34 +78 other), while 138 platforms have been identified in 2023. This includes 71 platforms nominated by only a few workers and listed in Table 3 as "other". This may indicate increasing competition between platforms for both labour and market share, and the platformisation of more types of work, such as hospitality work.

Table 3 also suggests that the platforms on which people most commonly work are those offering transport and food delivery work. There are 18 different platforms currently being used by transport and delivery workers to earn an income. Only eight transport and food delivery platforms were identified in 2019. This suggests growth in on-demand delivery services.

Excluded from the table are responses where the data was invalid because it was incomplete, could not be verified as a genuine platform, nominated selling, renting or licensing platforms rather than those involving work, or identified social media sites rather than platforms that intermediated work.

³⁷ Doordash launched in Australia in September 2019 and Amazon Flex began operations in Australia in January 2020.

Table 3. Platforms used currently or within last 12 months – 2023

Platform	Type(s) of work performed on the platform – Category	Count	% of current workers (n=2059)
Airtasker	Multiple categories, including odd jobs & maintenance	689	33.5%
Uber	Transport & food delivery	548	26.6%
Doordash	Transport & food delivery	407	19.8%
UberEats	Transport & food delivery	369	17.9%
Amazon Flex	Transport & food delivery	353	17.1%
Menulog	Transport & food delivery	314	15.3%
DiDi	Transport & food delivery	242	11.8%
Fiverr	Multiple categories, including creative & multimedia	223	10.8%
Deliveroo	Transport & food delivery	192	9.3%
Guru	Multiple categories, including professional services	185	9.0%
Freelancer	Multiple categories, including creative & multimedia	175	8.5%
HiPages	Skilled trades	160	7.8%
Sidekicker	Multiple categories, including hospitality, care, clerical	157	7.6%
Upwork	Multiple categories, including clerical & data entry	141	6.8%
Mad Paws	Caring	127	6.2%
Growth Mentor	Education	124	6.0%
99designs	Creative & multimedia	122	5.9%
Appen	Writing & translation, clerical & data entry	117	5.7%
HungryPanda	Transport & food delivery	114	5.5%
Ola	Transport & food delivery	112	5.4%
Lyft	Transport & food delivery	109	5.3%
Helping	Odd jobs & maintenance	105	5.1%
Sherpa	Transport & food delivery	105	5.1%
Amazon Turk	Software development & technology, clerical & data entry	99	4.8%
Hireup	Caring	99	4.8%
Shebah	Transport & food delivery	90	4.4%
TaskRabbit	Odd jobs & maintenance	78	3.8%
Mable	Caring	74	3.6%
Care.com	Caring	73	3.5%
BeActive	Personal services	72	3.5%
Careseekers	Caring	65	3.2%

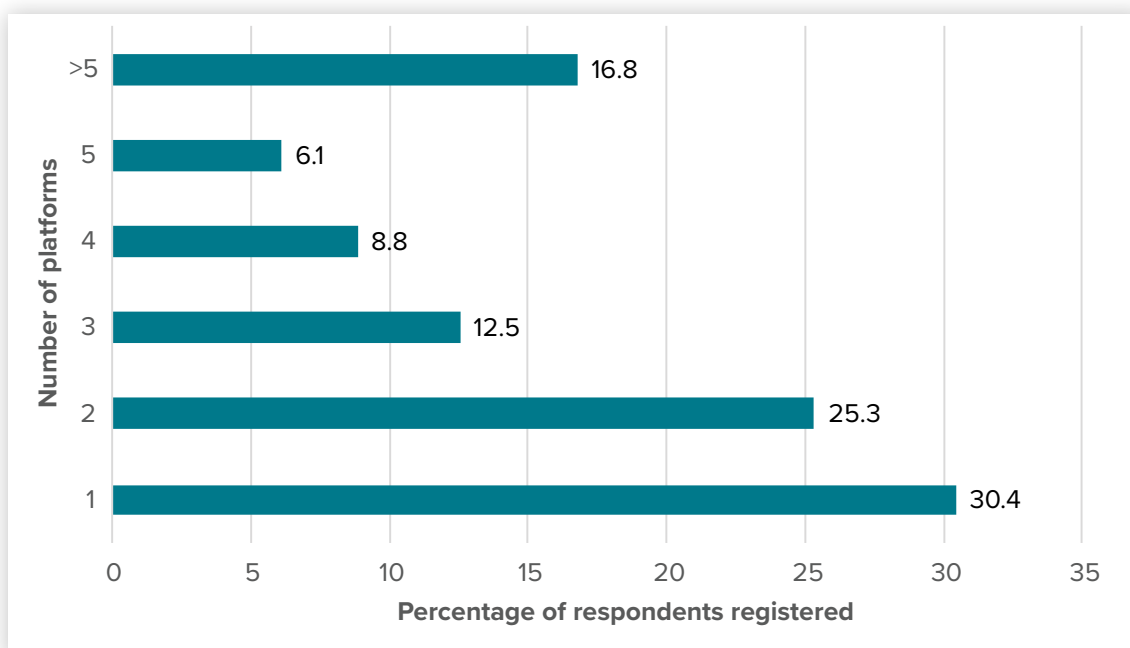
Platform	Type(s) of work performed on the platform – Category	Count	% of current workers (n=2059)
Uber Connect	Transport & food delivery	64	3.1%
Snappr	Creative & multimedia	60	2.9%
SoulAdvisor	Personal services	59	2.9%
SuperProf	Education	58	2.8%
Zoom2U	Transport & food delivery	55	2.7%
Rev	Writing & translation, clerical & data entry	54	2.6%
Pawshake	Caring	53	2.6%
Taxify	Transport & food delivery	53	2.6%
Juggle Street	Caring	50	2.4%
Kiddo	Caring	50	2.4%
Book an Artist	Creative & multimedia	46	2.2%
Supp	Hospitality	45	2.2%
Go People	Transport & food delivery	44	2.1%
GLG	Professional services	43	2.1%
First Tutors	Education	42	2.0%
Cambly	Education	41	2.0%
Expert360	Professional services	41	2.0%
TRIBE	Sales & marketing	41	2.0%
Blys	Personal services	39	1.9%
Learnmate	Education	39	1.9%
The Right Fit	Creative & multimedia	36	1.7%
TutorOcean	Education	33	1.6%
Oneflare	Multiple categories, including creative & multimedia	32	1.6%
Easi	Transport & food delivery	30	1.5%
Uberdoo	Transport & food delivery	29	1.4%
Little Lush Book	Personal services	27	1.3%
Whizz	Odd jobs & maintenance	27	1.3%
PhotoSesh	Creative & multimedia	26	1.3%
Tutero	Education	26	1.3%
Toptal	Multiple categories, including professional services	23	1.1%
Weploy	Sales & marketing	23	1.1%
Sarah Ashley On-demand	Personal services	22	1.1%

Platform	Type(s) of work performed on the platform – Category	Count	% of current workers (n=2059)
Dribbble	Creative & multimedia	21	1.0%
Rendevu	Personal services	17	0.8%
FeelitLIVE	Personal services	16	0.8%
PeoplePerHour	Multiple categories, including clerical & data entry	16	0.8%
Other	Multiple categories	71	3.4%

Note: Respondents could select more than one platform. Excludes invalid responses.

Often called “multi-apping”,³⁸ more than two-thirds (69.5%) of current platform workers are working across multiple platforms, including 16.8% who are registered with five or more platforms (see Figure 2). This is much higher than rates of multi-apping in 2019. Compared to 64.8% in 2019, only a third (30.4%) of current workers work on a single platform. Further analysis suggests that current workers registered on multiple platforms are significantly more likely to be doing *both* in-person and online work, rather than only one type of work.³⁹

Figure 2. Proportion of participants working across numbers of platforms



Experiences of current workers on their main platform

Current platform workers were asked to consider the last 12 months and identify the platform through which they have spent the most time seeking or performing work – their main platform. They were then asked a series of questions relating to this platform.

The most commonly identified main platforms are similar to that of all platforms currently used (listed in Table 3 above). That is, the most commonly identified main platforms are

38 Goods, C., Veen, A., & Barratt, T. (2019). “Is your gig any good?” Analysing job quality in the Australian platform-based food-delivery sector. *Journal of Industrial Relations*, 61(4), 502-527.

39 $\chi^2(8) = 164.46, p < .001$

Airtasker, Uber, UberEats, Doordash and Amazon Flex, although Fiverr was also commonly selected as a main platform.

The most common work undertaken is driving, transport and food and other delivery (referred to as transport and food delivery) which is provided by 26.3% of respondents through their main platform (see Table 4). Airtasker is the most common platform; however, respondents identified a wide variety of work that they did through Airtasker, including clerical and data entry, and creative and multi-media work, as well as odd jobs and maintenance, and other types of work.

Compared to 2019, the proportion of current workers who are offering transport and food delivery services has increased from 18.6% to 26.3%. Other notable increases that can be seen in Table 4 are in clerical and data entry work (12.3%), creative and multimedia work (11.5%), care work (11.9%), and education (6.7%), which was only 1.2% in 2019, as well as personal services (3.9%). Smaller proportions of workers are undertaking other types of work such as professional services work or odd jobs and maintenance work. Hospitality also emerged as a new type of platform work identified by current workers in 2023.

Table 4. Type of work performed through main digital platform – 2023 and 2019

Type of work		2023		2019	
		N	%	N	%
Transport and food delivery	(e.g., taxi services; food delivery; package or goods delivery)	535	26.3	183	18.6
Professional services	(e.g., accounting; consulting; financial planning; legal services; human resources; project management)	121	5.9	167	16.9
Odd jobs and maintenance work	(e.g., running errands; general maintenance duties; removalist)	113	5.5	113	11.5
Writing and translation	(e.g., academic writing; article writing; copywriting; creative writing; technical writing; translation)	94	4.6	89	9.0
Clerical and data entry	(e.g., customer service; data entry; transcription; tech support; Web research; virtual assistant)	250	12.3	77	7.8
Creative and multimedia	(e.g., animation; architecture; audio; logo design; photography; presentations; voice overs video)	235	11.5	76	7.7
Software development and technology	(e.g., data science; game development; app, software or web development; server maintenance; web scraping)	77	3.8	71	7.2
Caring	(e.g., aged or disability care; pet services; babysitting; nanny services)	242	11.9	69	7.0
Skilled trades work	(e.g., carpentry; plumbing; electrical work)	64	3.1	57	5.8
Sales and marketing support	(e.g., social media marketing; ad posting; lead generation; search engine optimisation; telemarketing)	74	3.6	49	5.0
Education	(e.g., tutoring; teaching; mentoring; online coaching)	136	6.7	12	1.2
Personal services	(e.g., sport/fitness coaching; massage; adult entertainment; tattoo and piercing)	79	3.9	9	0.9
Hospitality		9	0.4	-	-
Unknown or insufficient detail		8	0.4	14	1.4
Total		2037	100.0	986	100.0

A series of further analyses of the type of work by demographic characteristics reveal age, gender and education differences.⁴⁰ No distinctive patterns in terms of type of work emerged across other demographic characteristics, such as residency status or for those who speak a language other than English at home.

The 18-34 age group is the largest represented group across all types of work, followed by those aged 35-49 years. Platform workers in the 18-34 years of age group are most likely to work in transport and food delivery (27.8%), followed by clerical and data entry (14%), creative and multi-media work (12.6%), caring (11.1%) and education (6.4%), where many respondents indicated they are working for platforms providing online tutoring services. Similar patterns appeared in the 35-49 years of age group. However, fewer of this age work in education; instead, 9% provide odd jobs and maintenance work. Of interest, higher proportions of older workers (65+) are providing caring services (21.2%) and professional services (21.2%), with only 9.1% of this group working in transport and food delivery. Note however, that only 1.7% of all current workers are in this age category (65+).

The majority (60.7%) of all current platform workers doing care work are female. Males, however, have a significantly higher representation than women across a number of work categories: skilled trades (78.1%), professional services (72.7%), transport and food delivery (70.1%), software development or technology services (66.2%) and doing odd jobs and maintenance (63.7%).

Current workers with postgraduate qualifications are more likely to do platform work that provides education services, professional services, writing and translation, creative and multi-media tasks, or software and technology development. Qualifications and skills vary widely across some work types. For example, of those offering care work, 29% hold a Bachelor degree, while 25.7% hold only a high school certificate or have not completed high school. This span of qualifications is even more apparent in transport and food delivery, where 34.6% of delivery workers have a Bachelor degree, and 24% hold a high school certificate (or less). Similarly, 32% of data entry workers hold a Bachelor degree, while 26% have high school education or less. Around one-third (34.5%) of workers doing odd jobs and maintenance hold a Bachelor degree, while 24% have high school education or less.

Further analysis⁴¹ shows that 40.1% of current platform workers who are working as carers, 46% of those working in odd jobs and maintenance, and 42% of those working in skilled trades, work for only one platform. Multi-apping is more common in all other types of work, where less than 30% reported only working for a single platform.

40 A series of Chi-square tests were conducted to determine whether demographic differences emerged across the type of work performed on the main platform. Results are reported only where cell sizes were large enough to make confident assertions. Age: $\chi^2(48) = 130.28$, $p < .001$ gender: $\chi^2(64) = 134.83$, $p < .001$; education $\chi^2(112) = 196.05$, $p < .00$

41 A cross tabs analysis was also conducted to explore the which workers engaged in certain types of work were more likely to be working for more than one platform ($\chi^2(64) = 100.05$, $p = .003$).

Payment and earnings

Current platform workers were asked questions about the amounts they are paid for work undertaken through their main digital platform, and the processes associated with receiving those payments.

Most workers (60.1%) are paid via the platform for each completed task or job. However, 24.2% are paid for the time or hours they work (Table 5). These patterns and proportions are consistent with 2019 results (59% and 22% respectively).

Table 5. Basis of payment on main platform

Basis of payment	N	%
I am paid per completed task or job	1233	60.1
I am paid for the time or hours I work	497	24.2
I receive a fixed daily/weekly/monthly income	129	6.3
A combination of some or all of the above	144	7.0
I don't know	47	2.3
Total	2050	100.0

Current platform workers were also asked to estimate approximately how much per hour in pre-tax Australian dollars they usually get paid for tasks undertaken through their main digital platform (Table 6).

In 2019, 40% of current platform workers answered “I don’t know” to this question. Slightly fewer (36.7%) answered “I don’t know” in 2023, suggesting either that they have never calculated this amount or, if they have, it was not easy to recall. It may also indicate that fluctuating earnings makes calculating an hourly rate difficult for many workers. A very small proportion of workers (0.2%) noted that they are registered to work (or may have undertaken work) but have not earned any money yet.

It should be noted that in some categories of work respondents listed very high hourly rates which had an undue influence on the mean for these categories. It is possible that these respondents misinterpreted the question and listed weekly or annual income. To adjust for inflated means the top 1% of values were trimmed and the estimated means procedure (Huber’s M-estimator) was used to calculate weighted means. This procedure is commonly used in distributions with large outliers to give a more valid estimate of central tendency. For comparison, we recalculated 2019 figures with the top 1% of outliers removed and using the same Huber’s M-estimator means procedure, ensuring that any changing income patterns presented here are valid. Due to the low number of respondents providing personal services or education services in 2019, results were not re-calculated for these types of work. Hospitality is a new type of platform work in 2023.

Given the small number of respondents to this question and the limitations outlined above, the following estimated hourly rates should be read as a guide only and interpreted with caution. Further, it is important to note that estimated hourly rates reported here are pre-tax. Costs and work-related expenses are usually the responsibility of digital platform workers, and these are also not accounted for in income estimates. The flexibility of platform work also often means that platform workers work non-standard or unusual hours⁴² without

⁴² Messenger, J. (2018). Working time and the future of work. *ILO future of work research paper series*, 6(8), 33-37.

overtime or access to penalty rates which might otherwise increase their hourly earnings if they were employees.

The median hourly rate is \$30.00 per hour (pre-tax) and the mean (Huber's M-estimator) is \$31.99 per hour. In 2019 the median response for pre-tax dollars per hour was \$25.00 and the mean (using Huber's) was \$26.94 per hour. At the time of the survey, the National Minimum Wage was \$23.23 per hour.

Estimated average hourly rates have increased across all types of platform work except for creative and multimedia, which has remained relatively steady, and sales and marketing support, which has seen a decline in the average hourly rate (Table 6). Skilled trades, for example, earn an estimated average \$45.00 per hour in 2023, which is an increase from an estimated \$30.00 per hour in 2019 (Table 6).

There are no significant differences between the average hourly earnings of men and women. The average (Huber's mean) hourly rate for females is \$32.24, while males earn an average of \$31.87 per hour.⁴³

When viewed by type of platform work (see Table 6), there are sizeable differences in the approximate earnings per hour. For example, the estimated average hourly rate for clerical and data entry is \$26.77 per hour, yet it is \$81.82 per hour for professional services and \$54.38 for skilled trades work. The lowest average hourly rate (\$25.51 per hour) is reported by workers providing transport and food delivery services.

Table 6. Average approximate amount per hour earned on main platform by type of work – 2023 and 2019

Type of work	Median 2023	Median 2019	Huber's M-estimator 2023	Huber's M-estimator ⁴⁴ 2019	N 2023	N 2019
Professional services	64.00	40.00	81.82	43.84	74	97
Clerical and data entry	48.70	20.00	26.77	19.15	119	38
Creative and multimedia	35.00	34.00	36.34	36.47	111	38
Sales and marketing support	30.00	40.00	35.12	46.59	35	24
Software development and technology	40.00	30.00	42.71	29.31	42	39
Writing and translation	30.00	21.00	30.18	22.43	50	52
Caring	35.00	23.50	36.26	22.19	121	48
Transport and food delivery	25.00	20.00	25.51	21.62	334	118
Skilled trades work	45.00	30.00	54.38	34.74	37	35

⁴³ (N.S. $t(1109) = -.948$, $p = .344$).

⁴⁴ In some categories respondents listed very high hourly rates which had an undue influence on the mean for these categories. To adjust for inflated means, the top 1% of values were trimmed and the estimated means procedure used to calculate weighted means. This procedure is commonly used in distributions with large outliers to reduce the impact of outliers on means to give a more valid estimate of central tendency.

Type of work	Median 2023	Median 2019	Huber's M-estimator 2023	Huber's M-estimator ⁴⁴ 2019	N 2023	N 2019
Odd jobs and maintenance work	30.00	23.00	32.84	23.38	62	56
Education	40.00	40.00	38.70	-	78	11
Personal services	45.00	45.00	42.96	-	36	6
Hospitality	32.00	-	31.85	-	7	-

An analysis of hourly pay by income bands was undertaken to account for substantial variances between very low and very high rates of pay within each type of work (Table 7). More current digital platform workers are earning between \$30.00 and \$74.99, or over \$100 per hour, than in the past.

Income earning patterns are similar to those seen in 2019, with the highest proportion of current workers earning \$20.00-\$29.99 per hour, excluding those that said "I don't know" (Table 7). Compared to 2019, there are more workers in 2023 in the highest income band (\$100 or more) and slightly more workers in the mid-range income bands of \$30.00 up to \$74.99.

Table 7. Approximate amount per hour earned on main platform – 2023 and 2019

Amount per hour	2023		2019 ⁴⁵	
	N	%	N	%
Zero dollars	4	.2	7	0.7
\$0.01 - \$9.99	48	2.7	41	4.2
\$10.00 - \$14.99	43	2.4	42	4.3
\$15.00 - \$19.99	80	4.6	57	5.8
\$20.00 - \$29.99	308	17.5	181	18.5
\$30.00 - \$39.99	220	12.5	97	9.9
\$40.00 - \$49.99	91	5.2	42	4.3
\$50.00 - \$74.99	142	8.1	57	5.8
\$75.00 - \$99.99	28	1.6	21	2.2
\$100 or more	149	8.5	42	4.3
Do not know	644	36.7	394	40.2
Total	1757	100.0	988	100.0

The types of work that are more likely than other types of work to appear in each income band are summarised in Table 7a.

⁴⁵ Adjusted for comparison with 2023 where top 1% was trimmed.

Table 7a. Types of work most likely to appear in each income band

Income band \$ amount per hour	More likely than other work types ⁴⁶
0-9.99	Clerical & data entry; Writing & translation
10-14.99	Writing & translation; Sales & marketing
15-19.99	Clerical & data entry; Transport & food delivery
20-29.99	Transport & food delivery
30-39.99	Odd jobs & maintenance
40-49.99	Personal services
50-74.99	Personal services; Software development & technology
100+	Professional services work

Current workers doing transport and food or other delivery work are most likely to be in the \$15-\$19.99 or \$20-\$29.99 income bands. These workers also report the lowest average hourly rate (\$25.51 per hour), suggesting there is very little variance in hourly rates between workers in this type of work. As one point of comparison, at the time of the survey the minimum hourly rate in the *Road Transport and Distribution Award 2020* was \$23.89 per hour for full-time and part-time transport employees, or \$29.86 per hour for casual employees (other than shift workers).⁴⁷

Slightly higher proportions of women (5.7%) compared to men (3.5%) are in the lower income band of \$0.01-\$9.99, and also earning between \$10.00-\$14.99 (5.0% women and 3.0% men). A full breakdown is provided in Appendix E.

Current workers were also asked if they have received other monetary or non-monetary benefits (other than their income) from their main digital platform (Table 8).

Table 8. Other benefits received through the main digital platform

Benefits received	2023 N	2023 %
Monetary bonuses	523	25.4
Allowances to cover expenses such as tools, fuel or internet costs	371	18.0
Reduced platform fees or platform membership discounts	287	13.9
Vouchers, gift cards or products or services	284	13.8
Free meals	192	9.3
Other benefits	28	1.0
Did not receive any of these benefits	891	43.3

Note: Respondents could select more than one item. Percentage is of current workers.

Over 40% (43.3%) of current platform workers have not received any kind of additional benefits through their main digital platform.

The most common benefit received by current platform workers is monetary bonuses. Approximately one quarter (25.4%) of current workers have received such bonuses through

⁴⁶ $\chi^2(117) = 343.382, p < .001, n = 1121$

⁴⁷ Transport Worker Grade 1, Ordinary hours, Full-time and part-time transport employees – other than shift workers. Refer: https://library.fairwork.gov.au/award/?krn=ma000038#_Toc141282423

their main digital platform. Notably higher proportions⁴⁸ of transport and food delivery workers have received monetary bonuses (38.5%).

Allowances to cover work-related expenses have been received by 18% of current workers. Approximately 14% have received vouchers, gift cards or products (13.8%), or reduced platform fees (13.9%).

Current workers undertaking clerical and data entry, personal services, sales and marketing support, and skilled trades are more likely than other work types to receive allowances to cover expenses.⁴⁹ Compared to other types of work, reduced platform fees or discounts on platform memberships are more likely⁵⁰ to be received by workers performing clerical and data entry, sales and marketing support, and skilled trades. Those performing clerical and data entry, or sales and marketing support, are also more likely than other work types⁵¹ to receive vouchers or gift cards for products or services. The most likely⁵² to have received none of the listed benefits are respondents performing education or professional services work.

While no significant gender differences were found for individual benefit types, females are more likely than males to indicate they have received none of the listed benefit types.⁵³



48 $\chi^2(13, n=2037) = 76.507, p < .001$

49 $\chi^2(13, n=2037) = 29.93, p = .005$

50 $\chi^2(13, n=2037) = 31.714, p = .003$

51 $\chi^2(13, n=2037) = 38.036, p < .001$

52 $\chi^2(13, n=2037) = 47.095, p < .001$

53 $\chi^2(4) = 10.830, p = .029$

Expenses

Digital platform workers are usually independent contractors who are required to cover the costs associated with work-related expenses. Not surprisingly, the most common expense reported by current workers is fuel (Table 9).

Table 9. Costs and expenses incurred for work on main platform

Expenses	2023 N	2023 %
Certifications (e.g., Police checks, working with children checks, professional association memberships)	623	30.26
Cleaning products	395	19.18
Fuel	919	44.63
Insurance costs	546	26.52
Printing or paper costs	281	13.65
Public transport costs	272	13.21
Tools and equipment	392	19.04
Training courses	249	12.09
Vehicle maintenance (e.g., cars, trucks, bikes, vans)	475	23.07
Work clothing	319	15.49
Work related software costs (purchases or subscriptions)	277	13.45
Other expenses	59	2.87
I don't pay for anything	378	18.36

Note: Respondents could select more than one item.

These work-related expenses are likely to further reduce the earnings and average hourly income of digital platform workers.

Reliance on income from platform work

The above analysis focused on earnings through a worker's main digital platform. However, because the majority of current platform workers (69.5%) work on more than one platform, current workers were also asked to estimate the proportion of their annual income that came from *all* the digital platform work that they have undertaken in the last 12 months (including but not limited to their main platform).

Digital platform work provides supplementary income for the majority of workers. Consistent with prior research and 2019 results (2.7%), only a small proportion of current platform workers (3.6%) derive 100% of their total annual income from platform work (Table 10). For most, digital platform work supplements an income earned through another source. Four in five current platform workers (82.4%) report that less than half of their total annual income comes from platform work (Table 10). In contrast, 14.1% of current platform workers report that platform income constitutes at least half but less than 100% of their total income.

It is more common for care workers (6.7%) and software development and technology (5.2%) workers to earn 100% of their income from digital platform work, while no skilled trades workers indicated that digital platform work makes up 100% of their income.

Overall, women (4.2%) are slightly more likely than men (3.2%) to be earning 100% of their total annual income from digital platform work, but this difference is not significant.⁵⁴

Table 10. Proportion of total annual income from platform work

Proportion of total annual income	2023 N	2023 %
Less than 10% of my total annual income	945	46.2
Less than half of total annual income	740	36.2
At least half but less than 100% of annual income	288	14.1
100% of my total annual income	74	3.6

Despite being primarily a secondary or supplementary source of income, 58.3% of respondents currently participating in digital platform work are reliant on the additional income. Approximately one third (28.9%) consider it “essential for meeting their basic needs”. A further 29.4% said it is an “important part of overall income, but not essential”, whereas 38.0% consider the income “nice to have but can live without it” (Table 11).

There has been an increase in the proportion of digital platform workers who consider the income they earn from platform work to be essential for meeting their basic needs. Higher proportions of current platform workers are relying on the income in 2023, compared to responses in 2019 (Table 11).

Table 11. Reliance on income from working or offering services through digital platforms – 2023 and 2019

Reliance on income from working or offering services	2023		2019	
	N	%	N	%
Essential for meeting basic needs	593	28.9	152	15.4
Important part of overall income, but not essential	603	29.4	242	24.5
Nice to have, but can live without it	781	38.0	516	52.3
I do not earn any income from digital platform work	77	3.7	76	7.7
Total	2054	100.0	986	100.0

When analysed against demographic characteristics (Table 12), those with a disability are far more likely to say that digital platform work is essential for meeting basic needs and less likely to say “it is nice to have but I can live without it”.⁵⁵

There are no significant differences in reliance on income by age, gender, State/Territory, non-English speaking background, or residency status.

⁵⁴ $p=.857$ not significant

⁵⁵ People with a disability were far more likely to say that digital platform work was essential for meeting basic needs and less likely to say “it is nice to have but I can live without it” $\chi^2 (6, n=2044) =13.79, p=.032$

Unemployed respondents were more likely to say the income from digital platform work is essential for meeting basic needs,⁵⁶ while retirees were more likely to indicate it is “nice to have”, and volunteers were least likely to say the income is “essential”. Not surprisingly, of the current platform workers who classify themselves as unemployed (except for their digital platform work), 43.3% said that the income they receive from platform work is “essential to meeting basic needs”. Similarly, platform income is “essential for meeting basic needs” for 39.1% of full-time homemakers/unpaid carers.

Similarly, individuals with “some primary school” as their highest level of education are most likely to indicate that the income is essential and least likely to indicate that the income is “nice to have but I can live without it”.⁵⁷ Those with a postgraduate qualification or bachelor degree are least likely to indicate the income is essential for meeting basic needs, and postgraduate qualified respondents are also more likely that other educational categories to indicate the income is “nice to have”.

Type of platform work is also associated with reliance on income.⁵⁸ Care workers and those offering personal services are more likely to say the income is essential for meeting basic needs. Notably, care workers are also more likely than platform workers doing other types of work to derive 100% of their income from digital platform work. Current workers providing software development and technology services are more likely than others to indicate the income is “nice to have, but I can live without it”, with almost half (49.4%) selecting this option.

While the statistically significant demographic patterns of reliance on income described above are similar to those found previously, when compared to the 2019 data there are proportionally more workers in each demographic category that consider their digital platform work “essential for meeting basic needs” and considerably fewer who describe the income as “nice to have but can live without it”. For example, in 2019, 14.4% of employed or self-employed respondents said the income was essential. This has risen to 28.0% for this group. For unemployed respondents, the figure has risen from 31.3% in 2019 to 43.3% in 2023 (Table 12).⁵⁹

⁵⁶ In terms of labour force status, unemployed respondents were more likely to say the income was essential and less likely to indicate the income was just nice to have $\chi^2 (18, n=2045) = 70.66, p<.001$

⁵⁷ Those with less than Year 12 as their highest level of education were more likely to feel the income was essential for meeting basic needs and less likely to say the income was nice to have but not essential $\chi^2 (12, n=2047) = 46.47, p<.001$.

⁵⁸ $\chi^2 (15, n=2036), = 26.8, p<.001$

⁵⁹ Refer to Table 20 Reliance on income by selected demographic characteristics on page 58, McDonald et al., above, n. 1.

Table 12. Reliance on income by selected demographic characteristics

		Reliance on income				
		Essential	Important	Nice to have	No income	Total
Disability	Yes	36.2	30.7	29.4	3.8	100
	No	27.8	29.2	39.5	3.6	100
Highest level of education	Less than Year 12	40.2	26.0	27.6	6.3	100
	Year 12 or equivalent	32.2	28.7	35.7	3.5	100
	Vocational qualification	31.4	30.2	33.5	4.9	100
	Bachelor degree	25.5	33.0	39.0	2.5	100
	Postgraduate qualification	24.8	23.2	48.5	3.5	100
Labour force status	Employee or self-employed	28.0	30.0	39.3	2.7	100
	Unemployed	43.3	26.8	22.7	7.2	100
	Student	28.5	27.3	37.8	6.4	100
	Retired	20.7	3.4	58.6	17.2	100
	Full-time homemaker/unpaid carer	39.1	32.8	21.9	6.3	100
	Volunteer	11.8	29.4	41.2	17.6	100

Workers were also asked if they have ever experienced difficulties in obtaining payment for services provided via digital platforms (Table 13 below). More than half of respondents have experienced all types of payment difficulties, with 66.4% experiencing a delayed payment.

Approximately 30% of current workers have experienced underpayment (29.8%) for services, delayed payments (32.8%) and/or non-payment (27.6%) *at least a few times*. Approximately 10% of current workers experienced these problems often.

Table 13. Payment difficulties

Type of payment difficulty	Often	A few times	Once	Never
Underpayment (n=2050)	10.3	29.8	17.1	42.8
Delayed payment (n=2046)	12.9	32.8	20.7	33.6
Non-payment (n=2051)	8.2	27.6	15.5	48.7

Common reasons for payment difficulties given in current workers' free text responses were "bank problems", and clients who "complained", "disputed", "forgot" or "refused to pay", or clients who "ghosted" the worker or who delayed payments because they "had financial difficulties".

Time spent doing paid platform work

Current platform workers spend, on average, 11.9 hours per week doing paid work through their main digital platform (Table 14). Compared to 10 hours per week in 2019, this is a slight increase in the time respondents spend doing paid digital platform work. However, in both time periods a third of respondents (30.3% in 2023; 37.5% in 2019) answered “I don’t know” to this question.

Importantly, there was a slight variation in the wording of the questions between 2019 and 2023. In 2019 respondents were asked how many hours they spent “working or seeking work” and were then asked to estimate how many of those hours involved unpaid tasks. These questions were simplified in 2023. Respondents were first asked how many hours were spent doing “unpaid tasks” and to provide examples (findings are presented in the next part). Respondents were then asked: “How many hours in an average week do you spend doing paid work?”.

This variance in wording could have contributed to slightly different results. However, it was expected that the 2019 estimates, which included both paid and unpaid hours, would be higher. Given that in 2023 current workers are spending more hours solely on paid work, it is reasonable to assume that engagement with platform work has increased.

The mean weekly hours have increased across most types of work (Table 14). Skilled trades have seen the highest increase, from 8.9 hours in 2019 to 15.6 hours per week in 2023. Professional services have increased from 7.7 hours in 2019 to 14.2 hours in 2023, and sales and marketing support workers are also working more at 14.2 hours per week on average. Professional and skilled trades workers also report the highest earnings and, when compared to 2019, have the largest increase in their average hourly rate (see Table 6 in income). Sales and marketing support workers are at the lower income end despite working more hours.

In 2019 men worked an average of 10.8 hours and women worked an average of 8.2 hours per week.⁶⁰ Gender differences are less pronounced in 2023: men are paid for an average of 11.96 hours work per week and women for an average of 11.83 hours per week (5% trimmed means). This difference is not significant.⁶¹

60 $t(551)=2.18, p<.05$.

61 $T(645.35)=.393, p=.695$ – not significant.

Table 14. Mean weekly hours by type of work on main platform

Type of work on main platform	2023		2019	
	N	Mean weekly hours (5% trimmed)	N	Mean weekly hours (trimmed)*
Transport and food delivery	388	13.3	140	14.5
Software development and technology	48	10.2	44	14.3
Sales and marketing support	47	14.2	27	12.3
Skilled trades work	40	15.6	36	8.9
Odd jobs and maintenance work	58	9.3	60	8.8
Caring	124	13.0	38	8.6
Clerical and data entry	139	11.4	44	8.5
Personal services	42	13.2	6	8.0
Writing and translation	56	8.7	59	7.9
Professional services	79	14.2	105	7.7
Creative and multi-media	122	12	44	6.4
Education	99	6.5	9	3.4
Other- hospitality	6	5.9	-	-

*Note variances in the way the questions were asked (explained above) may affect comparisons.

Many respondents work across more than one platform (see Figure 2). Current workers were also asked how many hours of paid digital platform work they did overall, across all platforms.

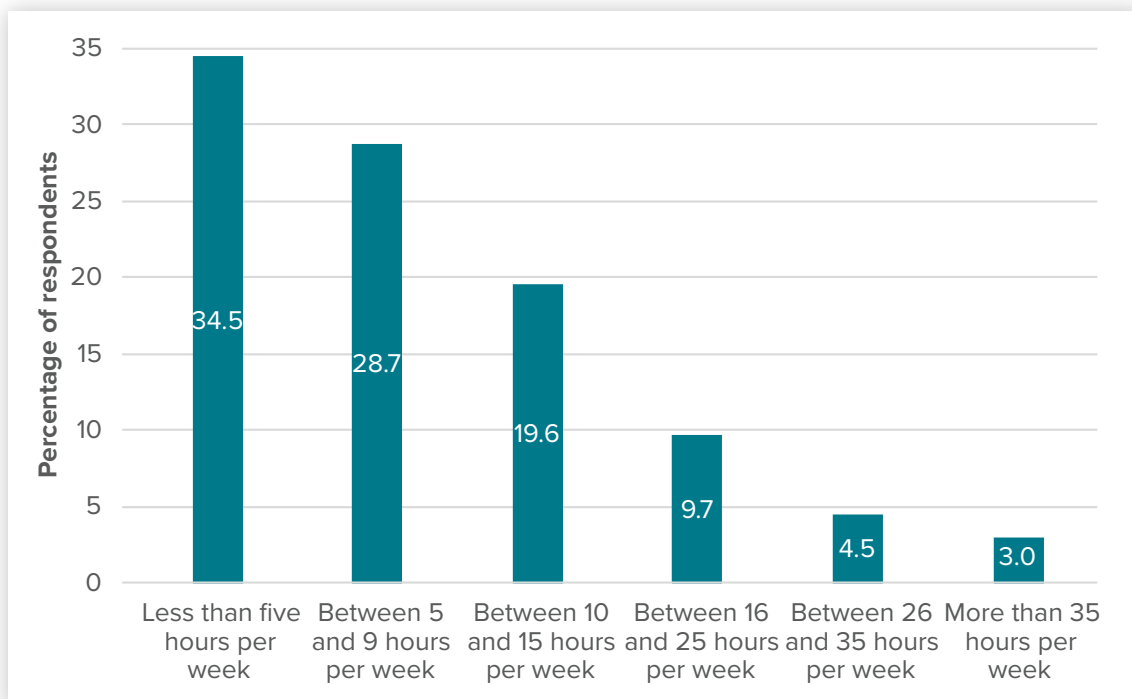
Figure 3 shows that most current platform workers do less than five hours of paid digital platform work in an average week. Only 3.0% of current platform workers are working close to full time hours (>35 hours per week) through digital platforms. A further 4.5% of current platform workers spend 26-35 hours per week. Approximately one third (34.5%) of current platform workers work less than 5 hours per week through all platforms with which they engage (Figure 3). These patterns of participation, where more workers work a small number of hours each week, are consistent with patterns in 2019.

This is not unexpected, given that most current platform workers are using such work to earn extra money or supplement an income from another source, which might be a full-time job. It also suggests that the nature of “gig” work – short term, once off tasks – has not changed significantly.

There are no significant differences in these findings by gender⁶² or other characteristics.

62 Gender (p=.316), not significant.

Figure 3. Mean weekly hours worked across all digital platforms



While the data shows consistent patterns in 2019 and 2023, the COVID-19 pandemic likely had an impact on the average number of paid work hours undertaken by digital platform workers in the period between the two surveys. Specifically, the number of hours worked likely varied during 2020 and 2021 and are not clearly reflected in the data presented here. These issues are explored in more detail in Part 5.

Unpaid time

In relation to their main platform, current workers were also asked how many hours in an average week they spend doing unpaid tasks associated with digital platform work. This includes tasks such as time logged on waiting for work; searching, quoting or bidding for work; updating profiles; and posting information or communicating with prospective clients. As noted above, this was a slightly different, more simplified question to the one asked in 2019.

Again, about one third (37.6%) of current digital platform workers answered “I don’t know” to this question. This is less than 2019, when 46% of workers answered that way in relation to unpaid hours. This difference may suggest that the new wording was clearer to respondents and hence resulted in more accurate estimations of unpaid work. It may also indicate that platform workers are more aware of the time they spend doing unpaid tasks. Nevertheless, a notable proportion in 2023 (37.6%) have never calculated these hours or cannot recall their unpaid work hours.

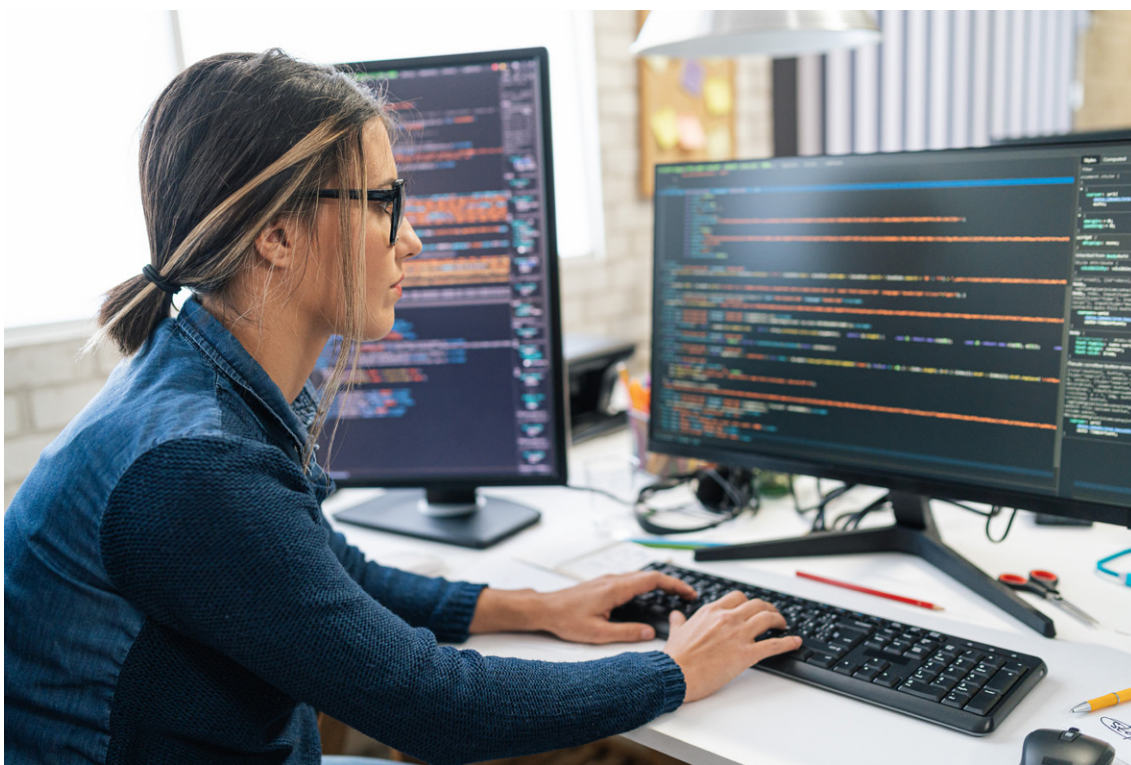
Acknowledging that answers are likely to be an approximation, for those who did estimate these weekly hours, the mean is 7.3 hours per week spent on unpaid tasks. The 2019 estimate was 4.9 unpaid hours per week.

There are no significant differences between the hours men or women spend on unpaid tasks related to their digital platform work.⁶³

Looking at type of work for current workers, those spending lower amounts of time on unpaid tasks include odd jobs and maintenance (5.2 hours), writing and translation (5.3 hours), education (5.4 hours), and personal services (5.5 hours).

Current digital platform workers in clerical and data entry (9.9 hours), creative and multimedia (9.8 hours), skilled trades work (9.1 hours), and sales and marketing support (9.0 hours), spend the most time on unpaid tasks (column 2, Table 15). The average weekly hours skilled trades workers estimated they spend on unpaid tasks related to seeking or doing work through digital platforms, increased from 3.5 hours in 2019 to 9.1 hours per week in 2023.

Collectively (combined results, Table 15 below), workers spending the most time on paid and unpaid tasks each week are in skilled trades work (24.7 hours), sales and marketing support (23.2 hours), and professional services (22.4 hours).



63 $t(5.67)=1.38, p=.282$

Table 15. Mean weekly hours on the main digital platform

Type of work on main platform	N	Mean weekly hours unpaid (5% trimmed)	Mean weekly hours paid (5% trimmed)	Combined
Transport and food delivery	299	6.5	13.3	19.8
Software development and technology	44	7.5	10.2	17.7
Sales and marketing support	45	9.0	14.2	23.2
Skilled trades work	38	9.1	15.6	24.7
Odd jobs and maintenance work	57	5.2	9.3	14.5
Caring	104	6.6	13.0	19.6
Clerical and data entry	116	9.9	11.4	21.3
Personal services	33	5.5	13.2	18.7
Writing and translation	49	5.3	8.7	14
Professional services	68	8.2	14.2	22.4
Creative and multi-media	117	9.8	12	21.8
Education	81	5.4	6.5	11.9
Other- hospitality	6	3.0	5.9	8.9

Duration and frequency of platform work

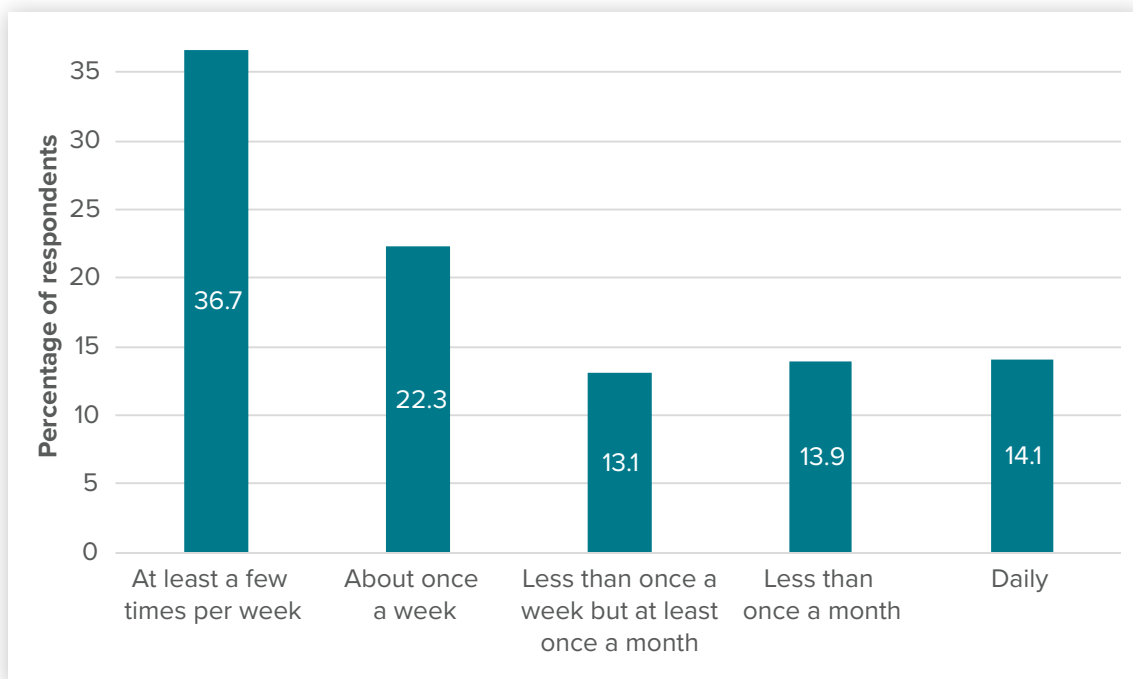
Current platform workers were also asked how frequently they engage with digital platforms to seek or undertake work.

Figure 4 shows that most platform workers undertake platform work at least a few times per week (36.7%), with a further 14.1% doing such work daily.⁶⁴ A further 22.3% participate at least once a week. In 2019, 27.5% were doing platform work a few times per week and 24.4% once a week. In addition to higher levels of participation, the frequency with which workers participate has also increased.

Overall, the results indicate that more individuals in Australia are doing platform work and they are doing it more often.

⁶⁴ "Daily" was an answer option offered in 2023 but not asked in 2019.

Figure 4. Frequency of engagement with digital platforms



Sales and marketing support workers are more likely than workers in other categories to indicate they work daily. Driving and transport workers are more likely to indicate they work “at least a few times a week”, while professional services workers are less likely to say this. Education workers are more likely than others to report they work “about once a week”. Professional services workers, compared to other workers, are more likely to indicate “less than once a week but at least once a month” or “less than once a month”. There are no significant differences in the frequency of engagement on digital platforms by gender or other demographic characteristics.

Current platform workers were asked when they started digital platform work, to determine how long workers engage with this method of earning an income.

While some (16.7%) current platform workers have been earning money this way for an extended period of time (>3 years), most are fairly new to platform work. More than two-thirds of respondents (68.1%) began platform work less than 2 years ago, with 44.4% starting within the last 12 months (Table 16). These patterns have changed very little since 2019, suggesting that most current workers participate in digital platform work for only a short period.

Table 16. Length of time since first started working or offering services

Length of time since first started working or offering services	2023 N	2023 %
Less than 6 months ago	370	18.0
Between 6 and 12 months ago	541	26.4
More than 1 year ago	485	23.7
More than 2 years ago	312	15.2
More than 3 years ago	176	8.6
More than 5 years ago	166	8.1
Total	984	100.0

The COVID-19 pandemic may also have had an impact on workers' decisions to start or stop digital platform work during 2020 and 2021. These issues are explored in Part 5.

Operations of the main platform

Current platform workers were asked a series of questions about the operations of the main platform on which they work. Patterns are relatively comparable to 2019, although the proportion of respondents answering "Yes" has seen a slight upward trend across all items.

As shown in Table 17, a substantial minority of respondents (between 10% and 25%), answered "I don't know" to each item. However, when compared to 2019 responses, the percentage of respondents answering "I don't know" has reduced. An "I don't know" response might imply that a worker has not experienced situations in which the relevant knowledge would be expected, for example, in regard to a dispute.

When viewed with the increased "Yes" responses, fewer "I don't know" responses suggests that platforms may be providing more and/or clearer information to workers or that workers have otherwise become more informed and are able to more confidently answer these questions.

Table 17. How the main digital platform operates

Digital platform operations	Yes	No	I don't know
Information, communication and access			
The platform has a dispute settlement process	51.3	24.2	24.5
The platform has someone available that I can contact if I have a problem or concern	64.0	21.8	14.2
The platform allows clients to rate my work	67.9	21.7	10.5
The platform allows me to rate the clients for whom I work	53.9	32.9	13.2
The platform allows me to provide feedback about the platform itself, its website, app or processes	63.8	22.1	14.1
The platform can restrict access to work opportunities if my work is not satisfactory	52.4	27.6	20.0
Fees and charges			
The platform covers me with at least one type of work-related insurance (e.g., for work-related injuries or professional indemnity)	36.7	42.7	20.6
The platform charges me a fee (e.g., a subscription cost) to register or access work	40.0	49.5	10.6
The platform charges for priority work opportunities	34.7	42.7	22.6
The platform requires me to pay a set amount or percentage of what I earn through the platform	48.6	37.7	13.7
Worker-platform relationship			
The platform requires me to display its brand or logo (e.g., on clothing, equipment or documents) when performing work or dealing with clients	35.7	52.6	11.7
I am required by the platform to be available to work either at particular times, or for at least a minimum amount of time	33.0	54.0	13.0
The platform penalises me for declining work	27.1	54.8	18.1
The platform allows me to arrange for someone else to do the work I have accepted	34.4	46.0	19.6
The platform allows me to work for a client that I originally met through the platform, without having to use the platform	38.1	42.9	19.0
The platform supplies me with the equipment or facilities (such as a computer, internet access, vehicle etc.) that I need to perform the work	29.0	61.7	9.3

The different features of platform operations have been categorised in Table 17 into three themes: information, communication and access; fees and charges; and worker-platform relationships.

In general, current platform workers are most aware of features relating to communication, information, and access. Ratings of workers by clients is reported to be more common than the reverse.

In relation to fees and charges, 40% of current workers are charged a fee by the platform to register to access work, 34.7% are charged to access priority work opportunities, and almost half (48.6%) pay the platform a percentage of what they earn. While 36.7% are provided with at least one type of work-related insurance by the platform, 20.6% do not know if they receive insurance in this way. The majority (42.7%) do not.

More than one third (35.7%) have to display the brand or logo of the platform, 29% are provided with equipment and facilities to do the work, and 33% have to be available to work at specific times or for a minimum amount of time.

In addition, current workers were asked “what do you consider to be your work status on your main digital platform?”. The majority of current workers (65.4%) said they are a self-employed contractor or freelancer. However, over a quarter (26.4%) of respondents to this question consider themselves an employee of their main platform. Some workers (8.2%) do not know.

It is notable that over a quarter of platform workers claim employment status, a figure comparable with the 28.4% in the 2019 survey who reported that their main platform “treated” them as employees. With only a few exceptions (such as the care platform Hireup), platform businesses operate on the assumption that the workers who use their services are independent contractors. That is typically reflected in their terms of use, although some transport and food delivery workers have brought legal proceedings (with mixed success) to claim employment-related benefits, such as protection against unfair dismissal.⁶⁵

Table 18. Perceived work status on main digital platform

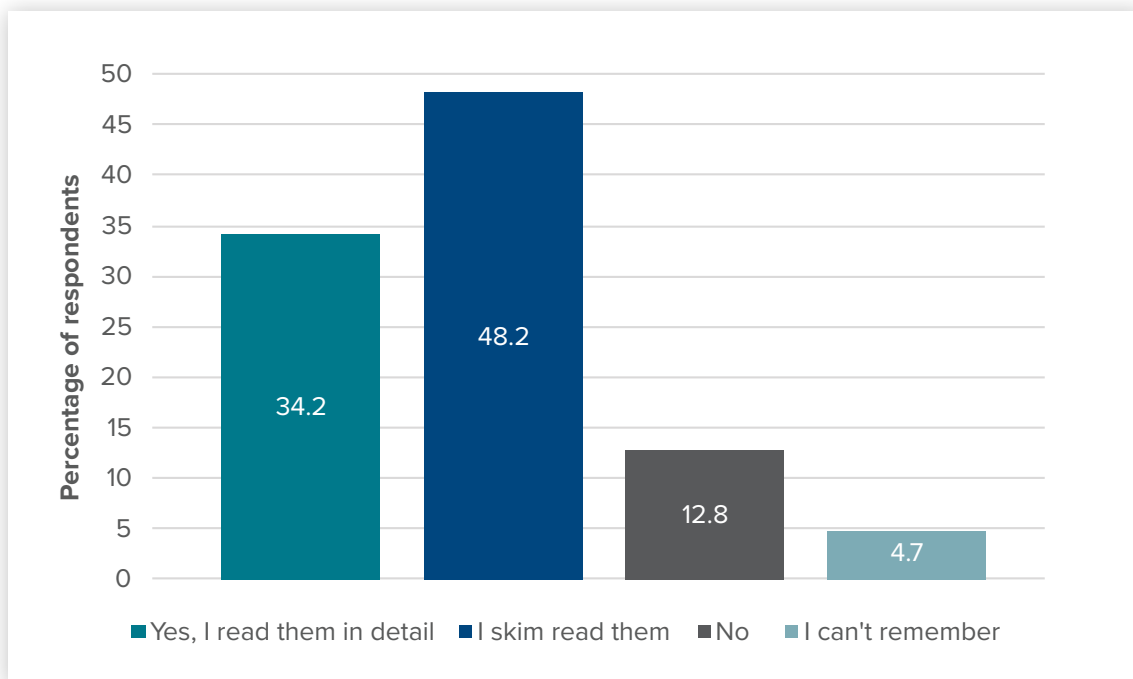
	2023 N	2023 %
I am an employee	541	26.4
I am a self-employed contractor or freelancer	1338	65.4
I don't know	168	8.2
Total	2047	100.0

⁶⁵ See, e.g., *Klooger v Foodora Australia Pty Ltd* [2018] FWC 6836; *Gupta v Portier Pacific Pty Ltd* [2020] FWCFB 1698; *Deliveroo Australia Pty Ltd v Franco* [2022] FWCFB 156. As this last decision makes clear, the chances of platform businesses being able to resist claims that their workers are really employees have been greatly enhanced by recent High Court decisions that emphasise the need to determine employment status by reference to contractually agreed terms, rather than the reality and substance of the working relationship: see Stewart, A., Irving, M. & Bomball, P. (2023), Shifting and ignoring the balance of power: The High Court's new rules for determining employment status, *University of New South Wales Law Journal*, 46(4), 1214–1251. However, the Albanese Government's Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Act (No 2) 2023, will reverse the effect of those decisions, at least for some purposes: see <https://www.dewr.gov.au/closing-loopholes/resources/meaning-employee-and-employer-fair-work-act-2009>. It will also empower the Fair Work Commission to set minimum standards on pay and other matters for at least some types of “employee-like” platform workers: see <https://www.dewr.gov.au/closing-loopholes/resources/extend-powers-fwc-include-employee-forms-work>.

Terms and conditions

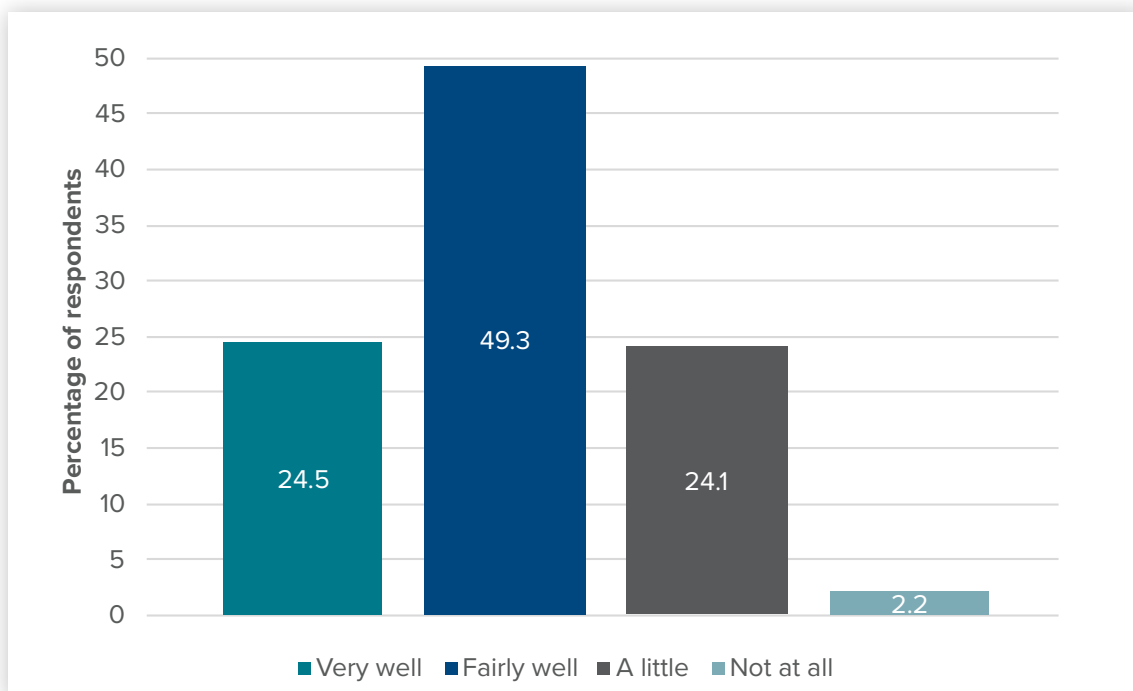
Current platform workers were asked if they had read the terms and conditions of their main platform. Most (82.4%) platform workers had done so. However, the majority of those only “skim read them”. Over 10% had not read them (Figure 5).

Figure 5. Did you read the platform terms and conditions?



Respondents who indicated that they had read the terms and conditions varied in their understanding of them (Figure 6). Close to half (49.3%) said they understood them “fairly well” but, importantly, over a quarter understood them only “a little” (24.1%) or “not at all” (2.2%).

Figure 6. Did you understand the platform terms and conditions?



Most current workers (53.4%)⁶⁶ said they are notified when the terms and conditions change, or at least are notified sometimes (23.6%). A further 7.1% said they are not notified when the platform changes its terms and conditions and 15.9% do not know, perhaps because their terms and conditions have not changed since they started working.

Locations of workers and clients

Most current platform workers (57.8%) work from their homes when undertaking digital platform work, 41.6% in a dedicated workspace and 16.2% in a shared space at home. Reflecting the high levels of participation in transport and food delivery and growth in the number of delivery platforms, 19.2% travel in their cars, vans or on their bikes when working. This is an increase from 14% in 2019 (Table 19).

Consistent with 2019 findings (14.9%), the location of 14.2% of workers is determined by the client.

Table 19. Location of worker

Location of worker	N	%
At home in a dedicated work space	852	41.6
At home in a shared living space	332	16.2
At my non-platform workplace	95	4.6
At another location chosen by me (e.g., café, library, co-working space)	68	3.3
Travelling in my car, van or on my bike	394	19.2
In the private home of my individual client	132	6.4
On the premises of my business client	78	3.8
At another location chosen by my client	81	4.0
Other specified locations	18	0.9
Total	2050	100.0

Current digital platform workers in Australia are mostly providing labour to Australian clients: 71% of respondents indicated that their clients are based in Australia only, and a further 22.3% indicated that their clients are from both Australia and overseas (Table 20). The proportion of workers who engage only with clients in Australia has risen from 65% in 2019 to 71% in 2023.

Table 20. Location of clients

Location of clients	N	%
Australia only	1455	71.0
Overseas only	78	3.8
Both Australia and overseas	457	22.3
I don't know	59	2.9
Total	2049	100.0

66 N=2044 respondents to this question.

Australian clients are based mostly in New South Wales (32.9%), Victoria (28.1%) and Queensland (19.2%), as indicated in Table 21. The proportional spread of clients across Australia has remained relatively consistent since 2019.

Table 21. State/Territory location of Australian clients

State/Territory location of Australian clients	N	%
Queensland	279	19.2
New South Wales	478	32.9
Victoria	409	28.1
Tasmania	24	1.6
South Australia	71	4.9
Western Australia	122	8.4
Northern Territory	8	0.5
Australian Capital Territory	17	1.2
I don't know	47	3.2
Total	1455	100.0

Given the higher proportion of workers doing in-person work, it could be expected that most of their clients would be located in the same State or Territory.

Satisfaction with work

Current platform workers were asked to indicate on a five-item scale (strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree) their satisfaction with various dimensions of platform work. The dimensions are clustered into three themes (as set out in Table 22): access to work and income; working conditions; and autonomy.

Table 22 shows the percentage of current platform workers who either strongly agreed/agreed, were neutral, or disagreed/strongly disagreed on each satisfaction question. Means, calculated on level of agreement on the five-point scale, are also presented.

Overall, current platform workers are moderately satisfied with most aspects of their digital platform work, as indicated by means over the neutral or mid-scale point 3 on all dimensions. It should be noted, however, that prior research has found that workers may express high levels of job satisfaction even in jobs which are generally considered to be of poor quality.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ Morgan J., Dill, J., & Kalleberg, A. (2013), The quality of healthcare jobs: Can intrinsic rewards compensate for low extrinsic rewards? *Work, Employment and Society*, 27(5), 802–822.

Current platform workers are most satisfied with dimensions of platform work that relate to their autonomy to make decisions about how and when they work. They are most satisfied with (in descending order):

- › I can work the hours I choose (4.02)
- › I can make my own decisions about how to schedule my work (4.01)
- › I can use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work (3.94)
- › I can plan how I do my work (3.90)
- › I can work for myself and be my own boss (3.90).

Current platform workers are less satisfied with dimensions connected to accessing work and earning an income, and social aspects of their work (Table 22). The lowest rated items are:

- › The income I earn is fair (3.06)
- › I have the chance to meet with others in my work (3.37)
- › I have the chance at work to get to know other people (3.42)
- › I have the ability to set the price for my services (3.45), and
- › The fees and costs associated with work through the platform are fair (3.47).

More workers are positive rather than negative about these aspects, and the difference in satisfaction levels between items is small.

Gender differences in satisfaction were evident for the following eight items:

- › I have the ability to set the price for my services
- › I understand how my pay is calculated
- › I can find work through the platform that accommodates my health issues or disability
- › I can use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work
- › The work allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own
- › I can work from home or another place that I choose
- › I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work
- › I enjoy the work that I do.

Across all eight items, women indicated higher satisfaction than men (see Appendix E).

Table 22. Satisfaction with dimensions of platform work on main platform

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
Access to work and income						
The income I earn is fair	17.2	43.3	25.2	11.1	3.1	3.06
I have the ability to set the price for my services	18.5	38.7	20.5	13.8	8.5	3.45
I understand how my pay is calculated	21.3	46.4	23.0	7.6	1.7	3.78
The fees and costs associated with work through the platform are fair	15.1	37.9	29.2	14.6	3.2	3.47
I can find regular work through the platform	16.5	41.4	24.5	13.9	3.7	3.53
I can find work through the platform that accommodates my health issues or disability	15.3	35.3	38.8	8.0	2.5	3.53
The competition for work is reasonable	14.4	44.4	26.3	12.1	2.7	3.56
Working conditions						
The rating system on the platform is fair	14.8	43.7	29.9	9.5	2.1	3.60
I have the chance at work to get to know other people	15.3	37.4	26.5	15.1	5.7	3.42
I have the chance to meet with others in my work	15.3	36.0	25.2	16.9	6.6	3.37
My work requires a variety of skills	18.0	42.1	25.5	11.4	3.0	3.61
I enjoy the work that I do	22.4	45.0	24.5	6.3	1.7	3.80
Autonomy						
I can work the hours I choose	34.1	42.0	16.9	5.4	1.5	4.02
I can work at the pace I choose	25.6	43.8	21.0	7.9	1.6	3.84
I can plan how I do my work	26.4	46.8	19.0	6.3	1.5	3.90
I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work	25.4	47.3	19.9	6.0	1.3	3.89
I can make my own decisions about how to schedule my work	30.8	46.3	16.8	5.0	1.1	4.01
I can use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work	27.5	45.8	20.7	4.5	1.4	3.94
The work allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own	24.6	46.5	20.9	6.5	1.5	3.86

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work	26.4	45.0	21.1	6.0	1.5	3.89
I can work from home or another place that I choose	25.7	36.8	19.9	10.5	7.1	3.63
I can work for myself and be my own boss	27.9	43.3	20.9	6.3	1.5	3.90

Problematic experiences

The survey asked current platform workers about whether or not they have been subject to experiences that might impact on their health and safety when doing platform work or have led to disputes. Specifically, current workers were asked if they have experienced problems with being paid, restricted platform access, unsafe conditions, or bullying and harassment, or whether they have been involved in a complaint or dispute when working on any of their digital platforms.

The findings in relation to payment difficulties experienced by current platform workers were presented earlier in the section concerning reliance on income from platform work.

Approximately one third (29.9%) of current workers⁶⁸ have been removed from a digital platform or had their access to work opportunities on a platform restricted at least once. This has occurred often for 3.9% of affected workers, 13.3% have experienced this a few times, and 12.7% have experienced it once. Free text responses from current workers indicate that removal or restricted access to the platform can occur for a wide range of reasons. Commonly cited reasons (examples below) included complaints either from a customer or by the worker; not fulfilling requirements set by the platform; or apparent violations of platform standards or terms and conditions. A number of current platform workers said that they were “not given any reasons” at the time that their platform access was restricted or removed.

Yes, they gave reason, as customer was complaining about my service through the platform, and then I was banned to do it.

I complained about conditions so the company ghosted me and I didn't get any more work from them.

When my access to the platform was restricted, I did receive some reasons for it. It was mainly due to a situation where I had a dispute with a client over the quality of the work I provided. Unfortunately, things escalated, and the client wasn't satisfied with the outcome even after a few rounds of revisions.

I made a mistake in delivering on menu log and they restricted my account for a week and took my pay

I didn't quite meet the expected targets the organisation had for me so they removed me from the platform and I haven't been able to reapply

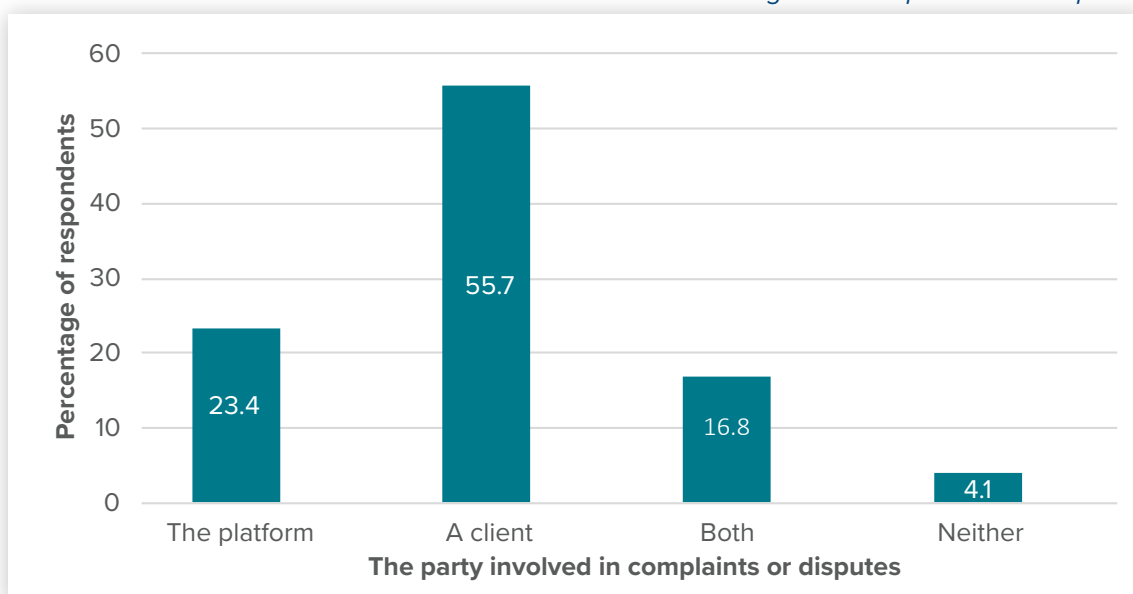
not definitive reasons, usually “you have breached policy”, never clarity on the policy breached and to appeal is a difficult process to find contact forms or Nos to call.

⁶⁸ N=2046 in response to this question.

These experiences provide important context for the Federal Government’s move to allow certain kinds of “employee-like” platform workers to seek relief from the Fair Work Commission against “unfair deactivation” from a platform.⁶⁹ The experiences described here also show the limited support available to platform workers, and point to the potential benefits of a central independent support and advice/referral service for platform workers.

As described above, deactivation from a platform is sometimes linked to customer complaints. Current platform workers were asked more about any complaints or disputes they have experienced. One quarter (25.9%, n=532) of current workers indicated they have been involved in a complaint or dispute while working through digital platforms. Complaints or disputes most commonly involved a client (72.5%) rather than the platform alone (23.4%) (Figure 7). Of those, 16.8% involved both the client and platform (Figure 7). While free text responses describe a range of disputes, the most common issues related to disputes with clients were about money or delayed/non-payments. This has been discussed in more detail in the earlier sections on income and earnings.

Figure 7. Complaints and disputes



Complaints or disputes were mostly handled through a formal process organised by the platform (64.7%), with 25.9% of current workers saying that it was not handled through a formal process and 9.2% unsure. The vast majority of current workers who have experienced a complaint or dispute (n=532) did not seek advice from another party such as a trade union, small business commission or government helpline. This may be because they chose not to, or they were not aware of these avenues, or because these avenues were not available at the time of the dispute, or because the platform process was satisfactory. The majority of respondents said they were satisfied or very satisfied with the process for dealing with the dispute or with the outcome (Figure 8). Approximately half were unsatisfied or still unsure. These findings suggest that platform dispute processes play an important role in supporting workers, yet there is room for improvement.

⁶⁹ See <https://www.dewr.gov.au/closing-loopholes/resources/extend-powers-fwc-include-employee-forms-work>.

Figure 8. Satisfaction with dispute processes and outcomes

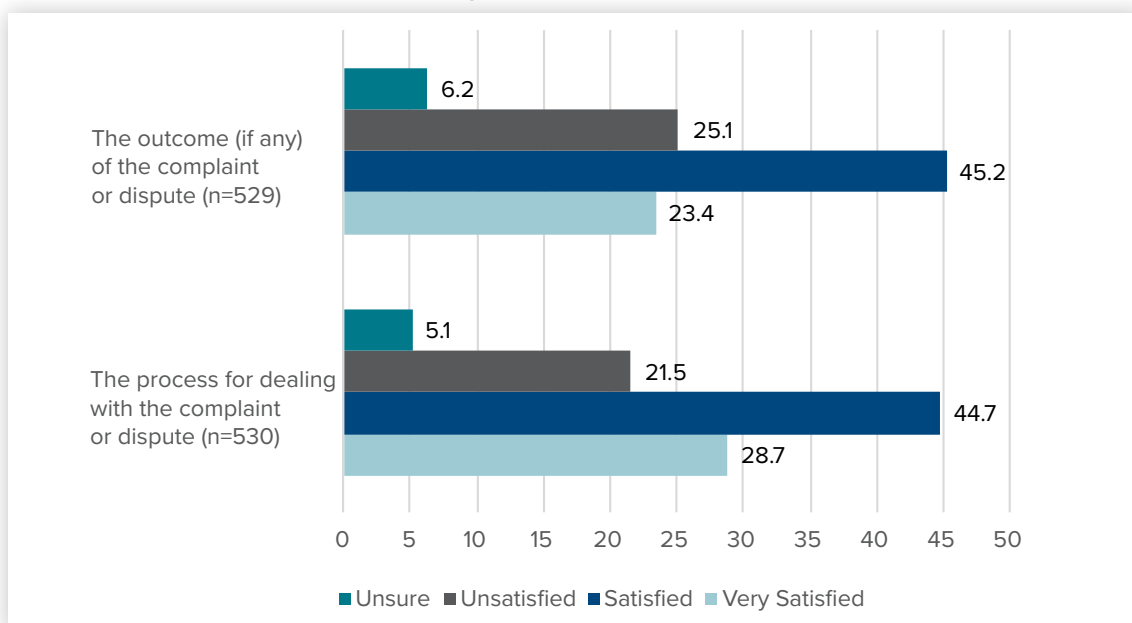


Table 23 below shows that current platform workers have been subjected to a range of other problematic experiences when working through digital platforms.

Table 23. Experiences of bullying, harassment and unsafe work conditions

	Often	A few times	Once	Never	Mean
Sexual harassment by a client (n=2047)	4.6	10.6	10.1	74.6	1.45
Race-related harassment by a client (n=2050)	4.3	12.5	11.4	71.8	1.49
Bullying by a client (n=2049)	4.8	14.3	16	64.9	1.59
Work conditions that risked your health or safety (n=2049)	5.6	15.1	16.2	63.1	1.63

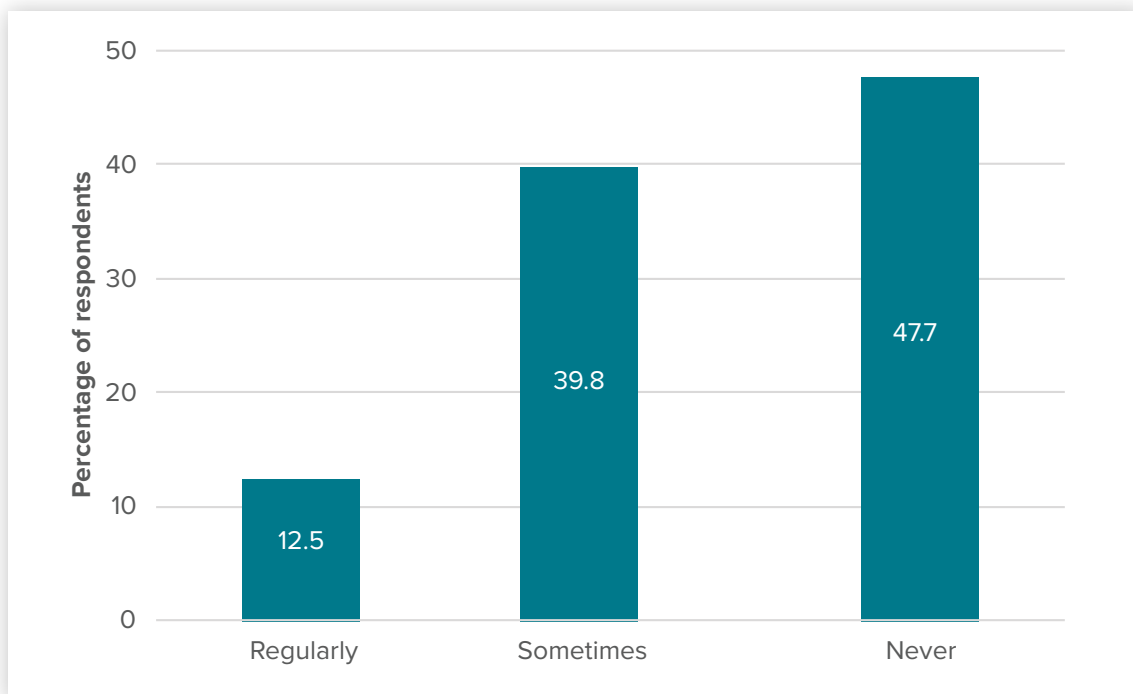
Over 20% of current workers have experienced work conditions that risked their health or safety at least a few times, with a further 16.2% experiencing health and safety risks at least once. Bullying, race-related harassment and sexual harassment are also not uncommon. Current workers report that they have experienced sexual harassment by a client (25.3%), race-related harassment by a client (28.2%) and, most commonly, bullying by a client (35.1%) (Table 23 above). Digital platform workers who are independent contractors may have few avenues for protection or redress from such damaging situations.⁷⁰

Two potential sources of support for dealing with problematic work experiences reside in peer workers and in union representation. However, digital platform workers have limited access to both of these sources of support. Relatively few are a member of a trade union (15.6%) or an association specifically representing platform workers (15.0%), though these proportions may be a little higher than would have been expected. At the same time, few

⁷⁰ But note the emphasis in Standard 6 of the Voluntary Fair Conduct and Accountability Standards (above n. 14) on the need for platforms to ensure (so far as reasonably practicable) a safe working environment. As the Standards note, platforms may be subject to legal duties in this respect under the Occupational Health and Safety Act 2004 (Vic) and its equivalents in other jurisdictions, regardless of whether their workers are employees or contractors.

respondents reported speaking with other platform workers about their pay and conditions (Figure 9).

Figure 9. Communication with other digital platform workers



Motivations for commencing platform work

As shown in Table 24, motivations for undertaking platform work in the first place are clustered in three themes: access to work and income; career development; and working conditions.

The strongest motivations, according to a four-item scale with anchor points “Very important” and “Not at all important”, are (in descending order of mean):

- › “working the hours I choose” (3.15)
- › “earning extra money” (3.13), and
- › “working in a place that I choose” (3.02).

Factors that indicate the need for flexibility at work and to supplement income are the strongest motivators for commencing digital platform work. There are, however, only small variances between means, indicating that a wide variety of reasons contribute to the decision to start platform work.

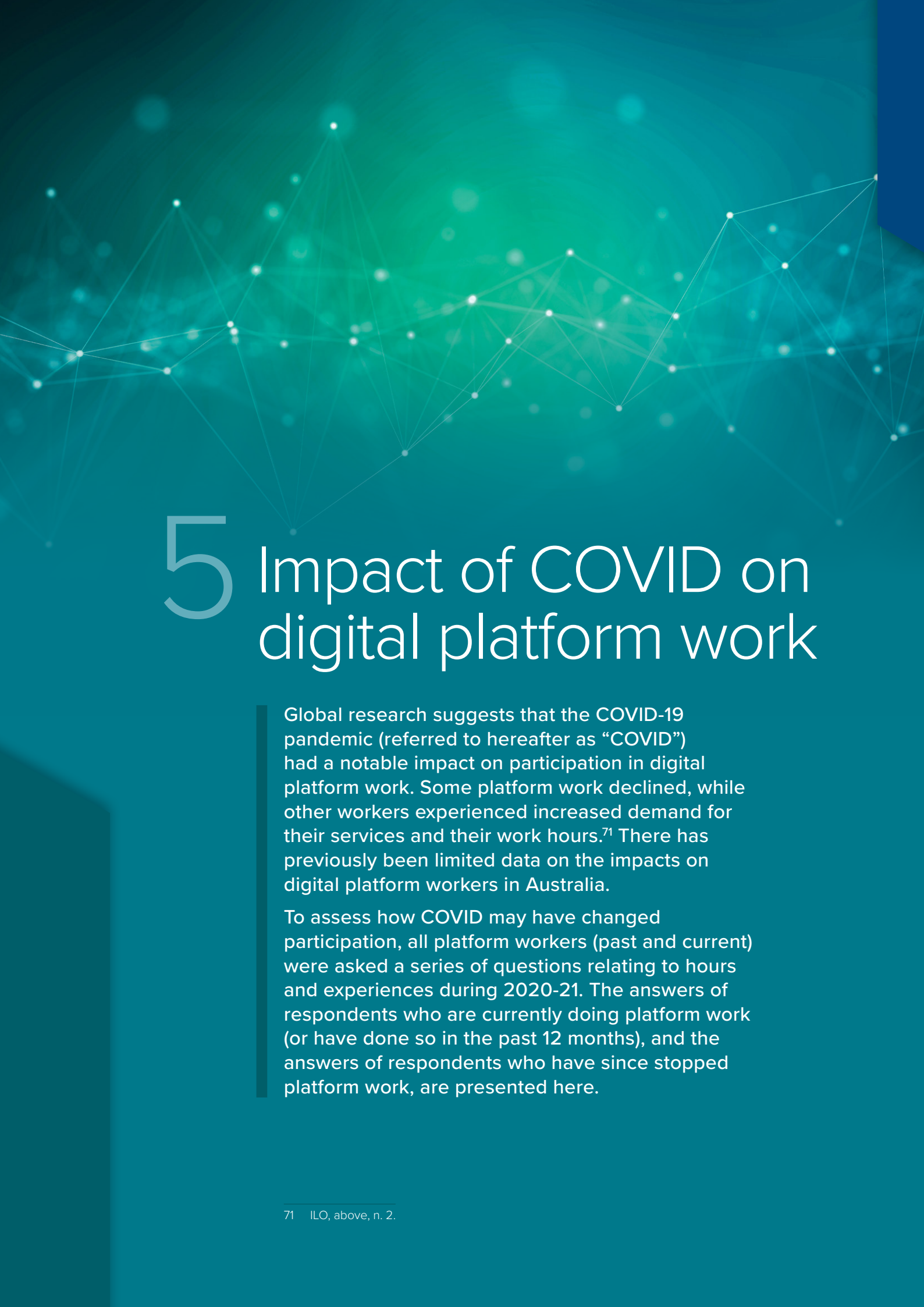
Table 24. Motivations for undertaking platform work (%)

	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Mean
Access to work and income					
A financial necessity	26.8	34.5	25.5	13.3	2.75
Earning extra money	37.6	41.2	18.1	3.1	3.13
Finding regular work	21.5	33.3	26.2	19.0	2.57
Finding work that accommodated my health issues or disability	18.9	25.5	17.3	38.4	2.25
Finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care)	19.8	23.8	18.7	37.7	2.26
Visa restrictions on my work options	13.8	22.7	13.8	49.7	2.00
Finding work that did not require a high level of English skills	14.2	21.7	15.4	48.7	2.02
Career development					
Building my career	21.7	31.0	23.9	23.4	2.51
Gaining or improving my knowledge or skills	25.1	36.4	23.3	15.2	2.71
Helping others	22.6	36.0	25.5	15.9	2.65
Working conditions					
Doing work that I enjoy	29.9	38.7	22.3	9.1	2.89
Choosing my own tasks or projects	28.6	42.2	21.7	7.5	2.92
Working the hours I choose	40.5	38.2	16.9	4.5	3.15
Working in a place that I choose	34.2	40.5	18.3	7.0	3.02
Working for myself and being my own boss	33.6	37.3	20.0	9.1	2.95
Connecting socially with people	18.9	30.0	27.0	24.1	2.44

Further analysis by gender shows that women are more likely than men to start platform work for the following reasons (for significance tests, see Appendix E):

- › a financial necessity
- › earning extra money
- › finding regular work
- › finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities
- › building my career
- › helping others
- › working the hours that I choose
- › working in a place that I choose, and
- › doing work that I enjoy.

When asked if they would recommend digital platform work to others, the vast majority of current workers (71.9%) said they would recommend it, 14.9% were not sure and 13.8% would not recommend it. Higher percentages of women (73.2%) than men (70.0%) would recommend platform work.



5 Impact of COVID on digital platform work

Global research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic (referred to hereafter as “COVID”) had a notable impact on participation in digital platform work. Some platform work declined, while other workers experienced increased demand for their services and their work hours.⁷¹ There has previously been limited data on the impacts on digital platform workers in Australia.

To assess how COVID may have changed participation, all platform workers (past and current) were asked a series of questions relating to hours and experiences during 2020-21. The answers of respondents who are currently doing platform work (or have done so in the past 12 months), and the answers of respondents who have since stopped platform work, are presented here.

71 ILO, above, n. 2.

All digital platform workers responding to the survey were asked: *During 2020–2021, did COVID restrictions, lockdowns or other related impacts affect your work through digital platforms?*

In general, COVID appears to have resulted in temporary increases in digital platform work participation. Responses suggest that people in Australia turned to digital platforms as a source of income at the height of the pandemic.

Current workers' experiences

Of the 2055 current workers who responded to this question, approximately one third (33.8%⁷²) were not doing any platform work in 2020–21: they answered no further questions relating to the impact of COVID. A further 18.3%⁷³ of current workers indicated that COVID did not affect the hours they worked through digital platforms. The remaining 47.8%⁷⁴ of workers either started or stopped platform work for COVID-related reasons, or had their hours increased or decreased, or their work was affected in another way. Table 25 provides a summary of the responses to this question.

Table 25. During 2020–2021, did COVID restrictions, lockdowns or other related impacts affect your work through digital platforms? – Current workers

	N	%
No, I was not doing any platform work in 2020–2021.	695	33.8
No, COVID did not affect the hours I worked through platforms.	377	18.3
Yes, COVID influenced me to start doing platform work	499	24.2
Yes, COVID influenced me to stop doing platform work	79	3.8
Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours than previously	190	9.2
Yes, COVID influenced me to work less hours than previously	109	5.3
My work was affected in another way	23	1.1
Yes COVID influenced me to work more hours on one platform and fewer on another	83	4.0

Of the 983 current platform workers who responded to this question, more started platform work (24.2%) than stopped (3.8%) during 2020–21. If they were already doing digital platform work, they also tended to work more hours (9.2%) as a result of restrictions, lockdowns or other COVID-related impacts. Only 3.8% stopped doing platform work and 5.3% worked fewer hours for that reason. The mix of platform work changed for another 4.0% who said that they decreased their hours on one platform but increased their hours on another.

The main reason current platform workers started platform work at this time, or worked more hours, was because they needed the money (52.8%) (see Table 26). A further 28.9% said they were simply free to do more work. Those who stopped doing platform work, or reduced their hours, did so for a wider variety of reasons (see Table 27), including restrictions that prevented their type of work (23.9%) and fears of contracting COVID (24.5%).

72 N=695

73 N=377

74 N=983

Table 26. Main reason for working more hours or starting platform work in 2020–2021 - current workers

	N	%
I needed the money	363	52.8
I was free to do more work	199	28.9
It got me out of the house	53	7.7
There was more demand for the kind of work I do	64	9.3
Other reason	9	1.3

Table 27. Main reason for working fewer hours or stopping platform work in 2020–2021 – current workers

	N	%
The type of platform work I do was restricted	45	23.9
I had additional family or caring responsibilities	33	17.6
I worked more in my non-platform work	14	7.4
I was concerned about contracting COVID	46	24.5
I was sick with COVID	12	6.4
There was less demand for the kind of work I do	34	18.1
Other reason	4	2.1

During COVID, a slightly higher proportion of men (10.2%) than women (7.7%) worked more hours than previously⁷⁵, while both men and women were relatively equally likely to work less hours. The most common reasons that both men and women gave for working more hours were because they “needed the money” (52.8%) and because they were “free to do more work” (28.9%).

People living with a disability or long-term health concern were almost twice as likely as those without a disability or long-term health concern to have stopped doing platform work as a result of COVID. These respondents were also more likely to say that they reduced hours on one platform but increased hours on another. Free text responses, while small in number, suggested that this reduction of hours reflected decisions to move from in-person (face-to-face) work (e.g., Uber) to increased online work (e.g., Fiverr), although some respondents indicated they simply moved to platforms where they believed there was more demand (such as Mable and Menulog).

At least 15%-30% of platform workers in each work category reported that they started platform work because of COVID. Of those reporting that they started platform work because of the pandemic, drivers, transport and food delivery workers were the largest work category (26.9%).

Respondents who undertook software engineering and technology work were more likely than those in other work categories to work more hours during COVID than previously. Skilled trade workers were up to 4 times more likely than other types of workers to stop doing platform work during this period. Skilled trades workers and writing and translation

⁷⁵ This difference was not significant.

workers were also up to 5 times more likely than other types of work to have worked less on one platform but more on another. Given the wide variety of digital platform work available, the movement from one platform to another may indicate that workers who usually undertook skilled trades tasks and those who usually do writing and translation tasks may have changed the type of platform work they did during COVID. Alternatively, this finding may indicate that some platforms had more work available, while work on other platforms reduced.

Those who worked more hours because they needed the money were more likely to be doing care work, driving and food delivery, or odd jobs and maintenance work, than other types of work. Those who were most likely to be free to do more work were undertaking software development or clerical and data entry work, as compared to other types of work. Those most likely to work more because of an increased demand for their services during COVID were in professional services, creative and multi-media work, and education.

Past workers' experiences

Given that some past workers may have been doing platform work during COVID, the same questions were asked of this group of respondents.

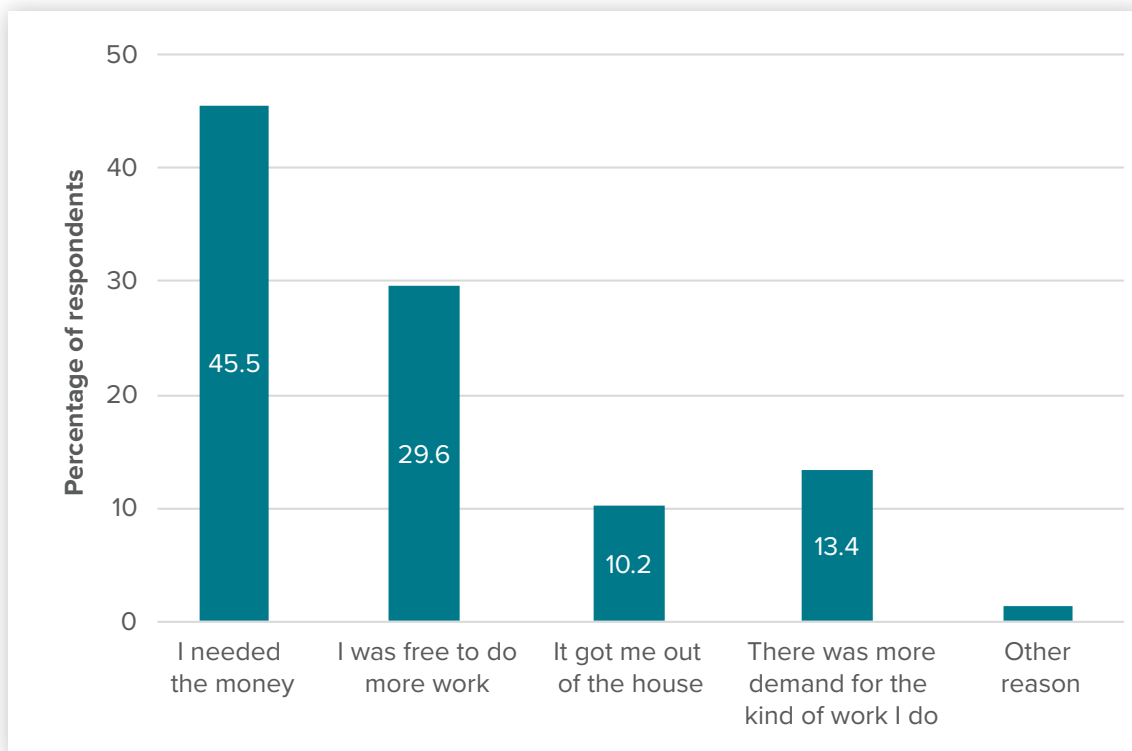
Table 28 shows that, of the 1519 past platform workers responding to this question, 613 (40.4%) were not doing platform work during 2020–2021 and a further 263 (17.3%) said that COVID did not affect the hours they worked through platforms. However, 17.4% of past workers stated that COVID influenced them to start platform work. As these are past workers who were not doing platform work in (at least part of) 2022 or in 2023, this suggests that COVID impacts were the primary driver for their participation in platform work. These workers started doing platform work because of the pandemic, but have now stopped.

Table 28. During 2020–2021, did COVID restrictions, lockdowns or other related impacts affect your work through digital platforms? – Past workers

	N	%
No, COVID did NOT affect the hours I was working through platforms	263	17.3
Yes, COVID influenced me to start doing platform work	265	17.4
Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours than previously	118	7.8
Yes, COVID influenced me to work fewer hours than previously	72	4.7
Yes, COVID influenced me to stop doing platform work	99	6.5
My work was affected in another way	28	1.8
No, I wasn't doing any platform work in 2020–2021.	613	40.4
Yes COVID influenced me to work more hours on one platform and fewer on another	61	4.0
Total	1519	100.0

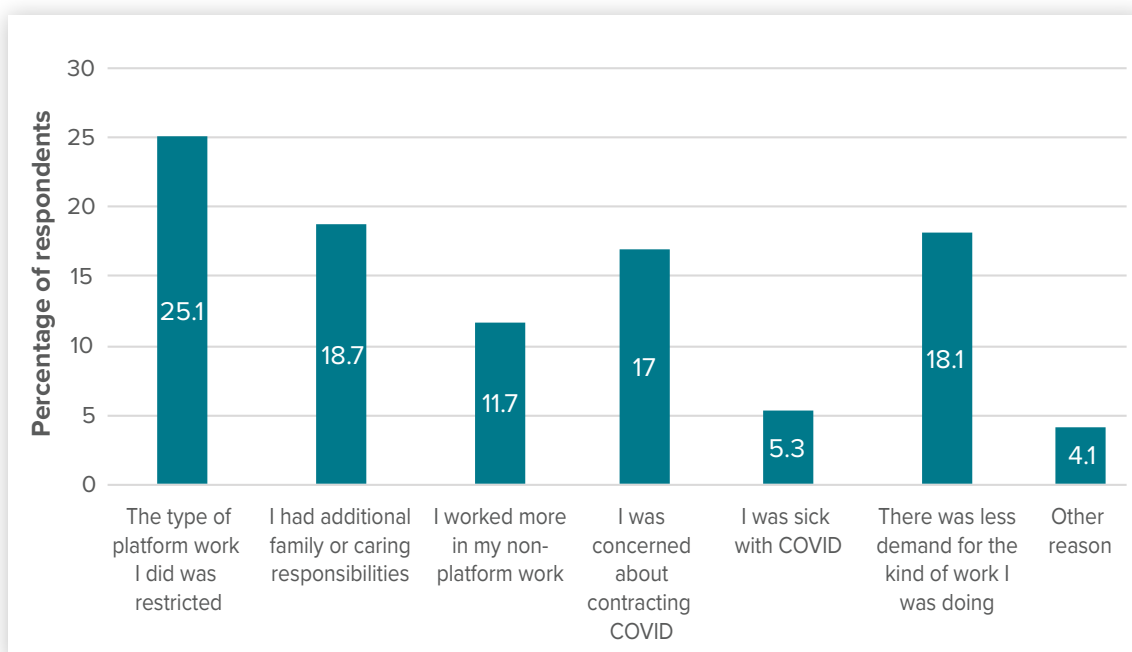
A further 7.8% worked more hours during COVID, and of these, 45.5% did so because they “needed the money” and approximately 30% (29.6%) were free to do more work (Figure 10).

Figure 10. Reasons for working more hours or starting platform work- past workers (n =382)



In similar patterns to current workers, the reasons for working fewer hours or stopping platform work during 2020–2021 were varied. Just over 10% of past workers had stopped platform work during COVID (6.5%) or worked fewer hours (4.7%) (Table 28). The most dominant reason was because their type of work was restricted. Reduced demand, caring responsibilities and concerns over contracting COVID also played a part (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Reasons for working fewer hours or stopping platform work – past workers (n=171)



Across both current and past workers, a few respondents indicated that their work had been changed in other ways during 2020–2021. These free text responses describe a reliance on platform work due to a loss of their usual employment or business income as a result of COVID impacts, while some respondents also described juggling caring responsibilities with work.



6 Past participation in digital platform work

Part 6 reports responses of individuals (past workers) who had participated in digital platform work more than 12 months ago, but had not done so in the last 12 months. It considers the common platforms on which people have previously undertaken such work, their reliance on that income and their patterns of working. This part also explores why people no longer participate in digital platform work.

It addresses the following research questions:

- 1 Which are the most common digital platforms on which people have previously undertaken digital platform work?
- 2 What patterns of duration and intensity are associated with digital platform work undertaken more than 12 months ago?
- 3 How reliant were people on the income from digital platform work?
- 4 How frequently did people engage with platform work?
- 5 What were the motivations for doing platform work?
- 6 What difficulties, if any, did they experience when undertaking platform work?
- 7 What are the reasons people stop working or offering services through digital platforms?

Past workers were also asked about their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. These results have already been presented in Part 5 of this report.

Common platforms for past work

The most common platforms used by past workers were: Airtasker (12.6%), Uber (8.4%), UberEats (5.5%), Doordash (4.3%) and Freelancer (4.3%). The first four are consistent with the platforms most commonly used by current workers. Airtasker, Uber and Freelancer were also the most commonly used platforms by past workers in 2019.

The variety of different platforms identified by past workers was greater than the number identified by past workers in 2019, perhaps reflecting a growth in the number of platform businesses operating in Australia.

When working or offering services through digital platforms, most past workers (28.4%) had been doing driving, transport or food delivery work, or were doing clerical and data entry work (22.5%), or care work (20.8%). A wide variety of work, however, was being undertaken (Table 29).

Table 29. Type of work undertaken by past workers

	2023 N	2023 %
Caring (e.g., Aged or disability care; Pet services; Babysitting; Nanny services)	319	20.8
Clerical and data entry (e.g., Customer service; Data entry; Transcription; Tech support; Web research; Virtual assistant)	344	22.5
Creative and multimedia (e.g., Animation; Architecture; Audio; Logo design; Photography; Presentations; Video production; Voiceovers)	285	18.6
Driving, transport and food or other delivery (e.g., Ride share or taxi services; food delivery; package or goods delivery)	435	28.4
Education (e.g., Tutoring; Teaching; Mentoring, Online coaching)	210	13.7
Hospitality	8	0.5
Odd jobs and maintenance work (e.g., Running errands, General maintenance duties; Removalist work)	222	14.5
Personal services (e.g., Sport/fitness coaching; Massage; Adult entertainment; Tattoo and piercing)	80	5.2
Professional services (e.g., Accounting; Consulting; Financial planning; Legal services; Human resources; Project management)	98	6.4
Sales and marketing support (e.g., Social media marketing; Ad posting; Lead generation; Search engine optimization; Telemarketing))	83	5.4
Skilled trades work (e.g., Carpentry; Plumbing; Electrical work)	87	5.7
Software development and technology (e.g., Data science; Game development; App, software or web development; Server main	93	6.1
Writing and translation (e.g., Academic writing; Article writing; Copywriting; Creative writing; Technical Writing; Tran	156	10.2
Other	14	9.14

Patterns of past work

For those who had worked through digital platforms more than 12 months ago, a substantial proportion had first started doing this more than three years ago (31.6%), or more than 5 years ago (30.3%), and 23.6% had done so 2-3 years ago (see Table 30). This suggests that once they stop working through digital platforms, many do not return, at least in the short term.

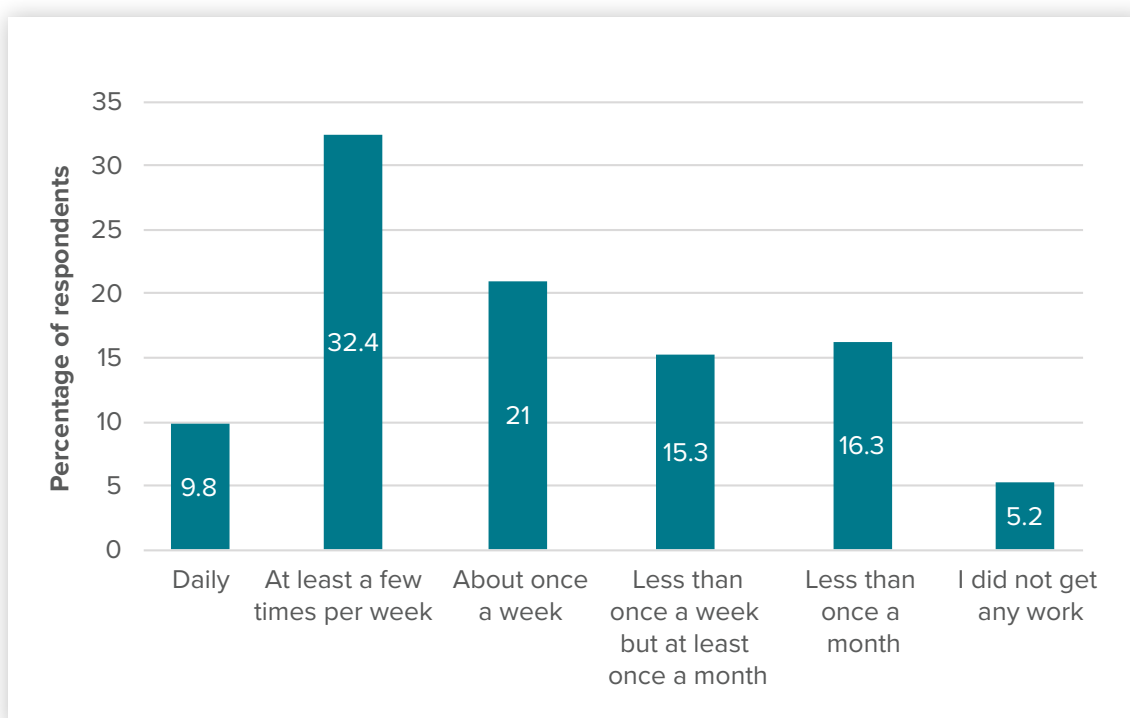
Table 30. Length of time since first starting work through digital platforms

Length of time since first started working or offering services	2023 N	2023 %
More than 1 year ago but less than 2 years ago	220	14.4
2-3 years ago	359	23.6
More than 3 years ago but less than 5 years ago	482	31.6
More than 5 years ago	462	30.3
Total	1523	100.0

Respondents who had worked through digital platforms more than 12 months ago were asked to indicate their frequency of engagement at that time (Figure 12). Before stopping, many workers were participating in platform work on a frequent basis. Most past workers had been undertaking digital platform work at least a few times per week (32.4%) or once a week (21%) with almost 10% of past workers doing so daily. Despite attempting to, 5.2% of past workers “did not get any work”.

Current workers seem to be participating slightly more frequently – 14.1% daily, 36.7% at least a few times a week and 22.3% about once a week (refer back to Figure 4). More past platform workers were participating monthly (Figure 12, compared to Figure 4). This could perhaps indicate more active participation in digital platform work or may be connected to the higher reliance on digital platform income experienced by current platform workers.

Figure 12. Frequency of engagement with digital platforms (Past workers, n=1526)



Reliance on income from platform work

While many past workers (41.8%) said that when they were doing digital platform work, they were not reliant on the income they had received, almost 60% of past workers had considered the income they earned an essential (26.9%) or an important (31.3%) part of their overall income (see Table 31).

The reliance on income was higher than that reported by past workers in 2019, when 59.5% of past workers “could live without it”, and 40.5% considered it “essential” or “important”.

Reliance on income results were nearly identical to those currently working through platforms.

Table 31. Reliance on income from working or offering services through digital platforms more than 12 months ago

Reliance on income from working or offering services	N	%
Essential for meeting basic needs	389	26.9
Important part of overall income, but not essential	453	31.3
Nice to have, but can live without it	605	41.8
Total	1447	100.0

Reasons for discontinuing platform work

Individuals may discontinue platform work for multiple reasons, and the survey conducted in 2019 provided some insight into common reasons for stopping platform work. Drawing from these insights, past workers were asked to indicate how important (“Very important” to “Not at all important”) the listed reasons were in deciding to stop platform work. Their responses are provided in Table 32 below.

Receiving pay that was too low was the strongest driver for discontinuing platform work (mean = 2.85). Other reasons were also important motivators. Over half of respondents noted that they stopped platform work because they found non-platform work (57.4% “very important” or “important”), while almost 60% (“very important” or “important”) said that finding or doing platform work was too time consuming (mean = 2.62). Respondents also stopped if they could not get *enough work through digital platforms, or because they did not find the work they did enjoyable*. Family or caring responsibilities were another important contributor to the decision to stop platform work (mean = 2.63).

Table 32. Reasons for discontinuing platform work

	Very Important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Mean
The work was not enjoyable	16.6	35.6	26.8	21	2.48
Family or caring responsibilities	24.7	35	18.6	21.8	2.63
Finding/doing jobs via the platform was too time-consuming	19.6	39.5	24.7	16.3	2.62
The pay was too low	28.2	38.2	23.6	10	2.85
I found other (non-platform) work	26.1	31.3	21.2	21.4	2.62
My financial situation improved and I didn't need additional income	18.7	34.5	24.8	22	2.5
I could not get enough work through platforms	21.2	35	27.1	16.8	2.61
COVID-19 impacts	20.3	27.5	21.4	30.8	2.37
My access was removed or restricted by the platform	9.3	23.7	17.3	49.7	1.93
Other reasons	11.3	20.8	14.3	53.6	1.9

Past participants were given the option to provide free text noting other reasons for no longer working or providing services through digital platforms. Some of the commonly cited reasons and examples of respondent comments are provided below.

A number of respondents used the free text opportunity to make further comment in relation to pay/income and time commitments, noting that it was the lack of job opportunities or pay relative to the time spent working or searching for work that contributed to their decision to stop working:

"Limited opportunities, payments were too low"; "irregular income", "there was little work in my area"; "no jobs", "limited suitable opportunities".

Relatedly, some respondents also highlighted long and irregular work hours:

"Working very late hours"; "No time to do anything"

"Wild fluctuations meant planning anything became difficult to do other things".

"The workload was much higher both online and face to face".

Other identified reasons included:

- › Health reasons (not related to COVID impacts).

"I had to surrender my driver's licence due to health reasons"; "Health reasons"; "Getting sick all the time"; "illness".

- › Costs associated with participating in digital platform work.

"Too much fuel [costs]"; "Too costly"; "Insurance increases made it no longer tenable".

"They made it mandatory for ride share drivers to register for GST and I wasn't making enough to justify paying for GST".

- › A move to a new location.

"Went overseas to work"; "Moved to a new area"; "moved location"; "moved interstate"

"I moved to a rural area and the work was no longer available".

It is not clear whether or not moving locations resulted in discontinuance of platform work because the main platform was unavailable in the new location, or platform work in general was inaccessible, or if other reasons associated with the move contributed to cessation. Interestingly, however, these comments suggest that digital platform work is not as portable as might be assumed.

A small but notable number of respondents said they stopped platform work because of concerns related to the practices of digital platforms. Comments included:

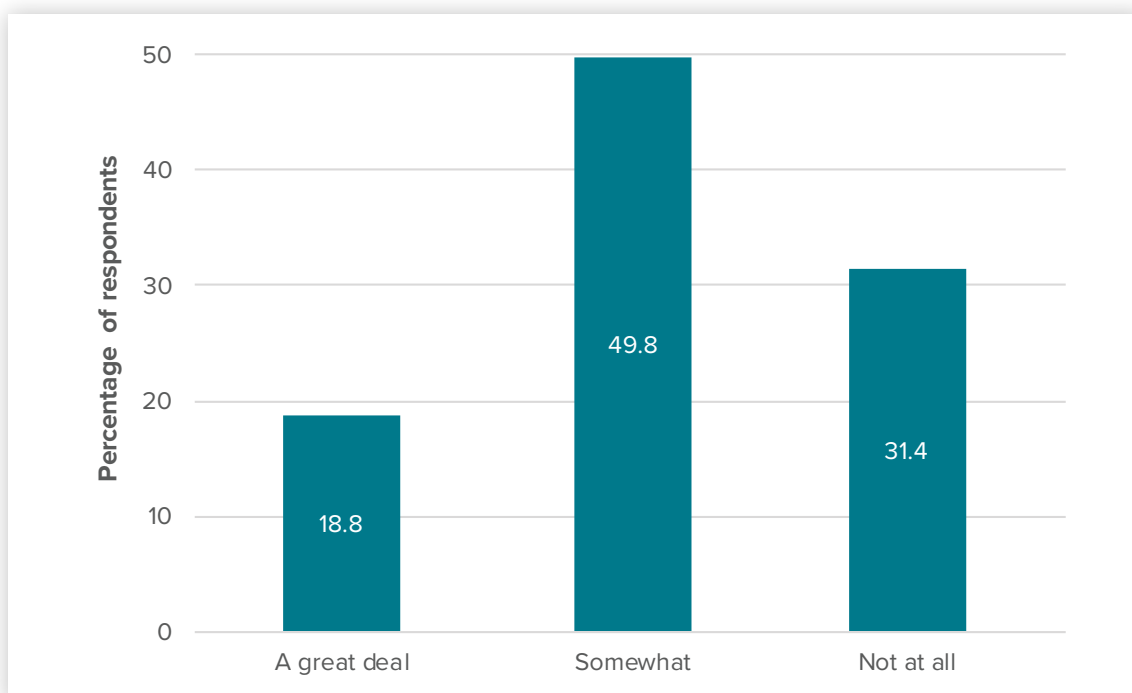
“Concerns around unfair practices/exploitation”; “Clients not paying me for the job”; “Bad services”; “Didn’t like their ideas”; “Detested the treatment of drivers – altering pay rates without notice or adequate reason”.

Influence on gaining other employment

For the first time, past platform workers were asked to what extent digital platform work assisted them to find other non-platform work. Past workers who had indicated that “I found other non-platform work” as a reason for stopping platform work (n=1191) were also asked if their platform work helped them to find that work.

Figure 13 shows that just under half (49.8%) of past workers felt that their platform work “somewhat” helped them to find their non-platform work, but less than a fifth (18.8%), believed it helped them “a great deal”.

Figure 13. Extent to which platform work assisted in finding non-platform work



When viewed by type of work, the vast majority of workers indicated that platform work “somewhat” helped them to find non-platform employment. Slightly higher proportions of workers doing caring (31.2%), personal services (31.3%) or software development (29.2%) said that digital platform work helped them “a great deal” to find non-platform work. Higher proportions of workers who reported that it did not help at all were in odd jobs and maintenance (33.0%), education (31.9%), writing and translation (33.9%), and driving, transport and delivery work (30.4%).

Motivations for commencing platform work

For the first time, past platform workers were asked about their reasons for starting work through digital platforms. As shown in Table 33, the strongest motivations for starting platform work related to income, either essential or supplementary (“A financial necessity” + “Earning extra money”), and flexibility to work when, on what, and where they chose and for themselves (“Working the hours I chose” + “Working in a place that I chose” + “Working for myself and being my own boss”). Over 25% of past workers rated these as very important influences in their original decision to start doing platform work. Overall, earning extra money was the strongest motivator (mean = 3.13).

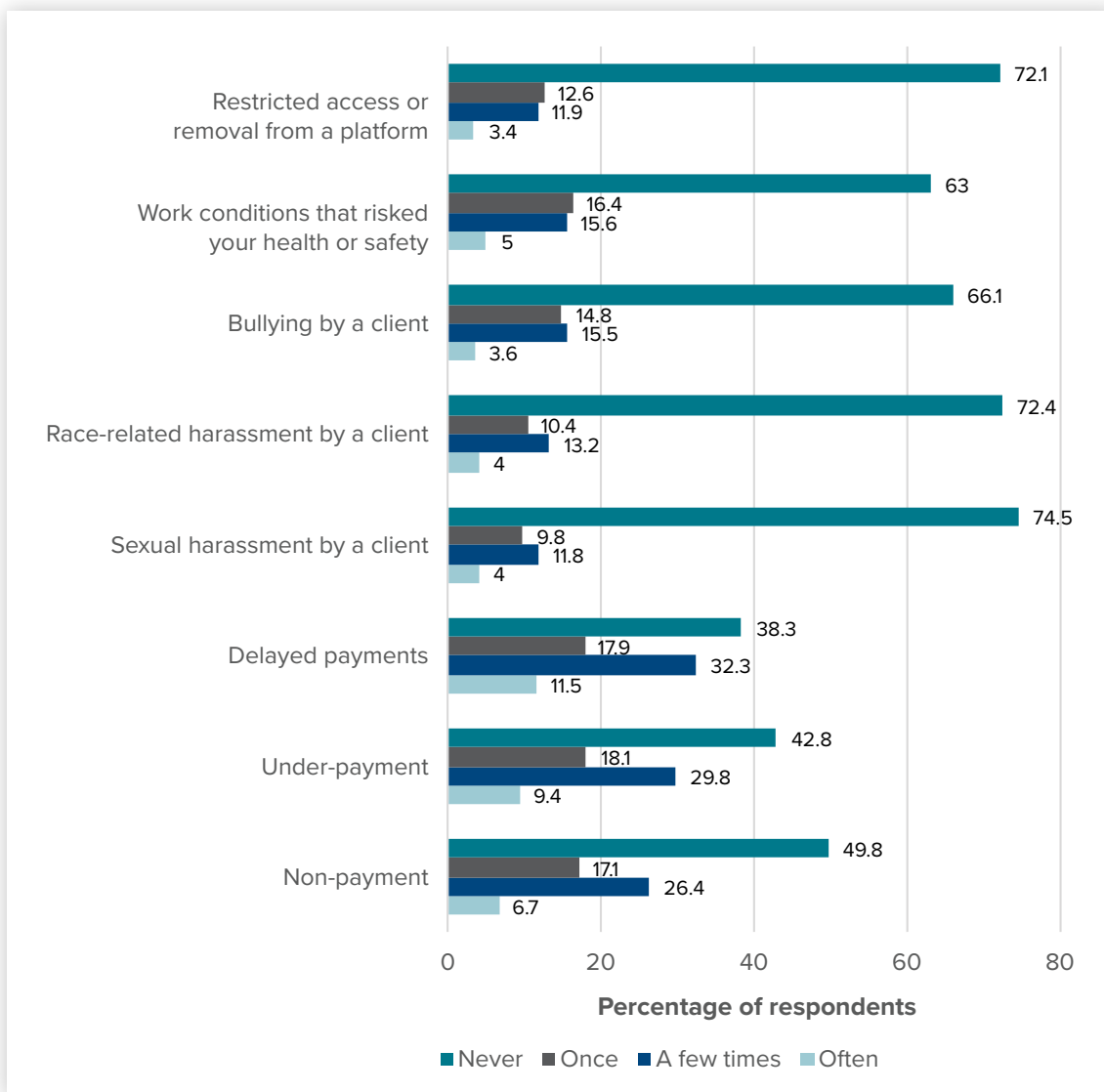
Table 33. Motivations of past workers to start doing platform work

	Very important	Important	Slightly important	Not at all important	Mean
Access to work and income					
A financial necessity	28.4	36.7	22.7	12.2	2.81
Earning extra money	37.1	42.2	17.2	3.6	3.13
Finding regular work	19.5	34.3	25.4	20.8	2.53
Finding work that accommodated my health issues or disability	14.6	27.4	16	42	2.15
Finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care)	17.2	25.7	18.3	38.8	2.21
Visa restrictions on my work options	9.5	22.3	15	53.2	1.88
Finding work that did not require a high level of English skills	10.4	23.8	15.7	50.1	1.95
Career development					
Building my career	16.3	30.8	27.1	25.9	2.37
Gaining or improving my knowledge or skills	18.9	38.2	27.6	15.3	2.61
Helping others	17.1	35.9	28.5	18.5	2.51
Working conditions					
Doing work that I enjoyed	24.1	41.8	25.8	8.3	2.82
Choosing my own tasks or projects	24.4	43.3	23.1	9.2	2.83
Working the hours I chose	34.4	41.2	18.6	5.8	3.04
Working in a place that I chose	28	41.8	19.8	10.3	2.88
Working for myself and being my own boss	28.6	40.3	19.4	11.8	2.86
Connecting socially with people	15.5	32.1	26.9	25.5	2.38

Experiences with past platform work

The survey asked past platform workers to reflect on experiences relating to their pay and conditions when they were doing digital platform work. Specifically, past workers were asked if they had experienced problems with being paid, restricted platform access, unsafe conditions, or bullying and harassment (see Figure 14).

Figure 14. Frequency of problematic platform experiences – Past workers



Restricted access to platforms

Of the 1513 past workers that responded to this question, just under one third (27.9%) had been removed from a platform or had their access to the platform restricted at least once, 11.9% had experienced this a few times, and 3.4% said it occurred “often”.

Past platform workers were asked if they were given any reasons for being removed from the platform or for having their access restricted. Of the 383 respondents who provided a free text answer to this question, only 21.6% had been given a reason. The majority (53.5%) did not know why their access had been restricted. A further 2% said the platform was not operational (either temporarily or permanently) and the remainder provided incomplete information.

Reasons for restricted access or removal provided by platforms included:

- › Customer complaints – *“Customer filed a complaint and I was banned”*
- › Unsatisfactory work – *“Just too many errors which were not my fault”; “inaccurate data entry”*
- › *“Violating standards”* or breaches of terms and conditions – *“The primary reason provided was a violation of the platform’s terms of service related to content guidelines”*
- › Non-payment of platform fees – *“Didn’t pay a fee”*
- › Declining work – *“Because I refused a job that I was unable to do”; “removed for 24 hours because I turned down 2 drives”, or*
- › Providing insufficient information or reputational ratings – *“Not enough personal information”; “need to be more reputable”; “restricted as I was new”.*

A few respondents believed the reasons were *“bc [because] I was complaining”*, with one respondent noting they were *“threatened [with] deplatforming when complaining about underpayment”*.

Unsafe conditions, including bullying and harassment:

Over one third (37%) of past workers said that they had experienced work conditions that risked their health and safety when they were doing digital platform work. This had occurred a few times for 15.6% of past workers, and for 5% this had occurred often.

Bullying by a client had been experienced by 33.9% of past digital platform workers. Race-related harassment by a client had been experienced by 27.6% of past workers, with 4% experiencing it often, and 13.2% reporting that it had occurred a few times. Sexual harassment by a client occurred a little less frequently yet was still experienced by a quarter (25.6%) of past digital platform workers. Of these, 11.8% said they had been sexually harassed by a client a few times.

Payment difficulties

Past workers were asked if they had ever been underpaid, experienced delayed payment or non-payments when doing digital platform work. Over 50% of past platform workers had experienced payment difficulties at least once, but mostly a few times, across all categories (see Table 34). Delayed payments were the most widely experienced problem.

Table 34. Payment difficulties experienced by past workers

	N	Often	A few times	Once	Never
Non-payment	1521	6.7 %	26.4%	17.1%	49.8%
Under-payment	1518	9.4%	29.8%	18.1%	42.8%
Delayed payments	1519	11.5%	32.3%	17.9%	38.3%

When asked about these payment difficulties, over 1000 respondents provided free text answers. The vast majority of these clearly indicated that the most common reason for under-payments, payment delays or non-payments were client related. Either the “client refused to pay” or “client delayed payment” or “client disputed payment” or the client

became “uncontactable”. Other reasons for payment difficulties related to technical or banking issues and delays, or because the platform ceased operations (approximately 20 cases which is less than 2% of the responses).

Respondents also described how the responsibility for redressing payment problems was left with the worker and required significant time and effort.

“[H]ad to follow up with the platform and took a while to be paid.”

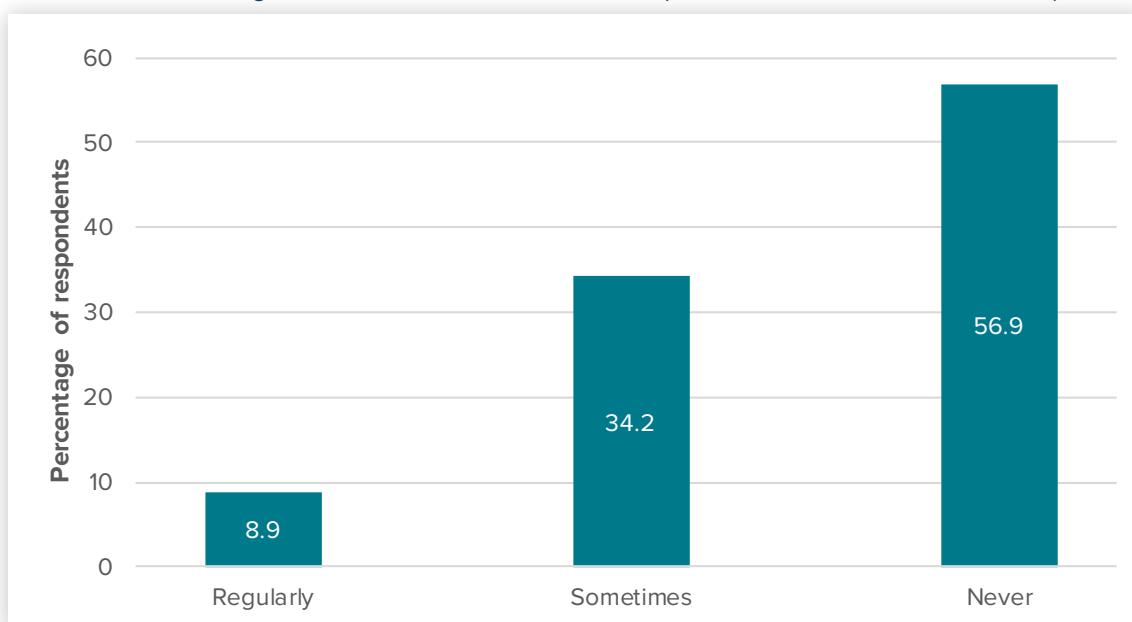
“I have had a few clients who were not paying on time and I had to chase them up with multiple email correspondents [sic].”

“I encountered payment difficulties due to the platform’s cessation of operations in Australia. However, I proactively engaged with affected clients to establish alternative payment solutions, and the majority were understanding and cooperative, leading to a successful resolution.”

“I became my own debt collector - very unpleasant side effect”.

The majority of past platform workers did not discuss their pay or working conditions with other platform workers at the time they were working (see Figure 15).

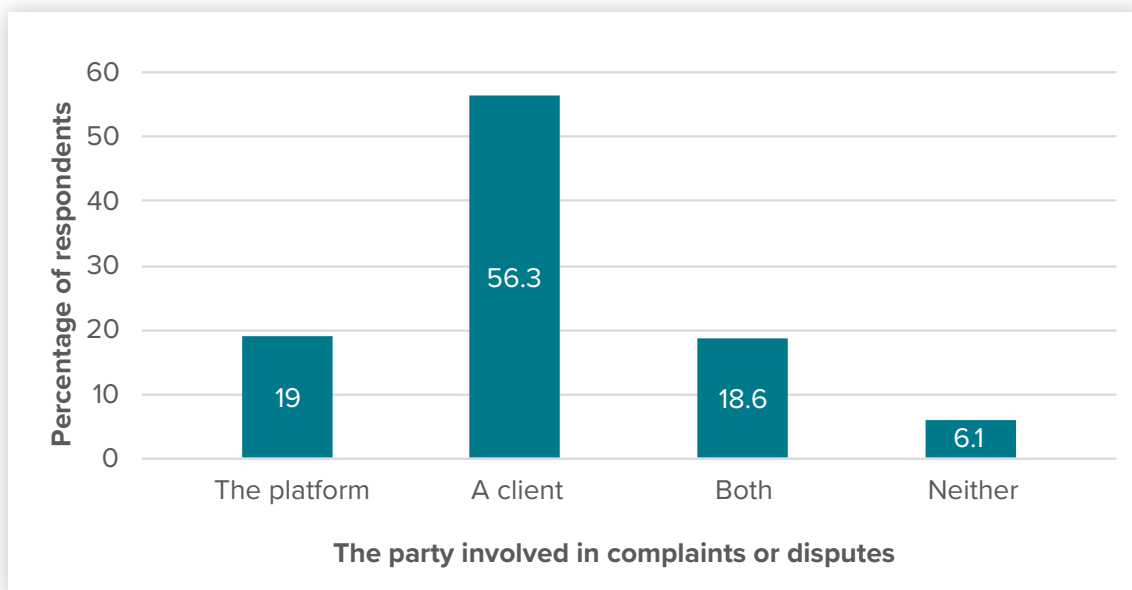
Figure 15. Communication with other platform workers – Past workers (n=1518)



Complaints and disputes

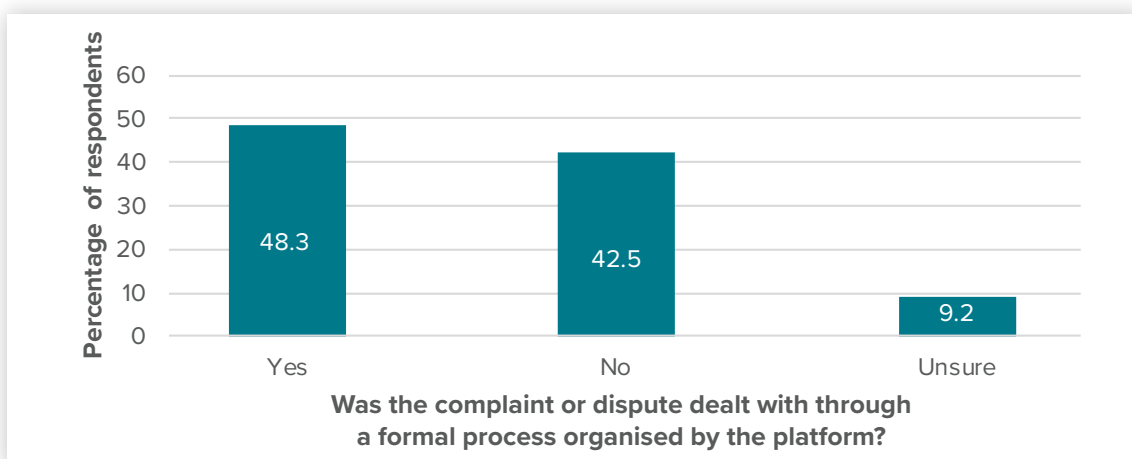
Consistent with the responses regarding payment difficulties, 19.2% of past platform workers (n=292), indicated that they had been involved in a complaint or dispute while working through digital platforms. Unsurprisingly, given the earlier responses, these most commonly involved clients (56.3%), with a further 18.6% indicating it involved both the platform and client (see Figure 16 below).

Figure 16. Complaints and disputes – Past workers (n=295)



Slightly more complaints/disputes were handled through a formal process organised by the platform (48.3%), than those that were not (42.5%) (Figure 17), and most workers were satisfied (44%) or very satisfied (19.5%) with the process. The same applied to the outcome of the dispute (44.1% satisfied, 16.2% very satisfied). In relation to disputes and complaints that were dealt with largely by the worker without any support, 90.7% said that they did not seek advice from another party such as a trade union, small business commission or government helpline. Yet one quarter of past workers (25.7%) were a member of a trade union (10.9%) or an association specifically representing platform workers (14.8%) at the time they worked. It is also important to note that some sources of advice (such as gig worker-specific helplines) may not have been available to platform workers who were doing work more than 12 months ago.

Figure 17. Processes for dealing with complaints or disputes – Past workers (n=294)





7 Gendered patterns of participation

Part 7 draws together some of the gendered dimensions of digital platform work highlighted throughout this report. It encompasses both current and past platform workers and other ways of earning an income through digital platforms, as discussed more generally in Part 8.

Gender continues to be a statistically significant indicator of participation in platform work. As was the case in 2019, female survey respondents in 2023 are significantly less likely than male respondents to work on digital platforms. Women are only half as likely as men to do digital platform work.⁷⁶

At the same time, gendered patterns of participation by type of work have emerged. The majority (60.7%) of all current platform workers doing care work are female. Care workers are also the group who most commonly (6.7%) earn 100% of their income from digital platform work. Males have a significantly higher representation than women across a number of traditionally masculinised work categories, including skilled trades (78.1%), professional services (72.7%), transport and food delivery (70.1%), software development or technology services (66.2%), and doing odd jobs and maintenance (63.7%).

Software development and technology services, and professional services work, are also more likely than other types of work to be in the higher income bands (earning more than \$50 per hour). Slightly higher proportions of women than men are in the lower income bands (\$14.99 and under).

These outcomes point to an ongoing stratification of men and women according to type of platform work. It is also worthy of note that in 2023 those currently earning income by renting out premises are far more likely to be men.

Gender differences in paid hours are less pronounced in 2023 than in 2019 and indeed are not significant. Men are paid for an average of 11.96 hours work per week and women are paid for an average of 11.83 hours per week.⁷⁷

In terms of income, for current workers the estimated average hourly rate⁷⁸ for females (\$32.24) is \$0.37 higher than for males (\$31.87). Importantly, the lowest average hourly rate (\$25.51) was reported by workers providing transport and food delivery services, where the price for services is usually set by the platform. This work is predominantly undertaken by males and has an impact on the gender split of the average hourly rate. At the same time, notably higher proportions of transport and food delivery workers have received monetary bonuses (38.5%).

Additional benefits from platform may include: monetary bonuses; allowances to cover expenses such as tool, fuel or internet costs; reduced platform fees or platform membership discounts; vouchers, gift cards or products or services; and free meals. These can all be important to the overall material gain from doing gig work. While no significant gender differences were found for each of these individual benefit types, females are more likely than males to indicate they have received none of the listed benefit types.

Gender is also a statistically significant factor in satisfaction with platform work. Among those currently participating, satisfaction across all eight items measured is higher for women than men. In particular, women are more satisfied with the ability to set the price for their services, and to work from home or another place of their choice. In 2019, however, gender differences in satisfaction were revealed on only two questions: “I have the ability to set the price for my services” and “the fees and costs associated with work through the platform are fair”. In both cases, women’s satisfaction was lower than men’s. Further, of current workers in 2023, more women (73.2%) than men (70.0%) would recommend platform work.

⁷⁶ Refer Appendix D for results.

⁷⁷ 5% trimmed means.

⁷⁸ Using Huber’s M-estimator to calculate weighted means.

During the height of COVID, of the cohort of current workers, men were more likely than women to work more hours than previously, while both men and women were relatively equally likely to work fewer hours. About 17% of both current workers and past workers who stopped work during 2020–21 did so because of caring responsibilities. Restrictions on the type of work they did was a more common reason for stopping platform work.

Overall, gender is a statistically significant factor in likelihood of participation in gig work, the types of work undertaken, the motivations for commencing gig work, the likelihood of receiving benefits, and levels of satisfaction.





8 Other ways of earning money in the digital economy

While the survey focussed on digital platform workers, all respondents also answered questions about other ways they earned money through digital platforms. Part 8 presents results that explain the variety of ways that respondents earn money through the digital economy. It includes information on respondents who are earning an income through digital platforms by:

- › Selling products or their own possessions, creating content or licensing creative works
- › Renting out premises to someone else, or
- › Leasing out their campervan, parking space, car (but not driving it), or other goods such as tools, toys or dresses to someone else.

In this part we refer to these activities as selling, licensing or renting out.

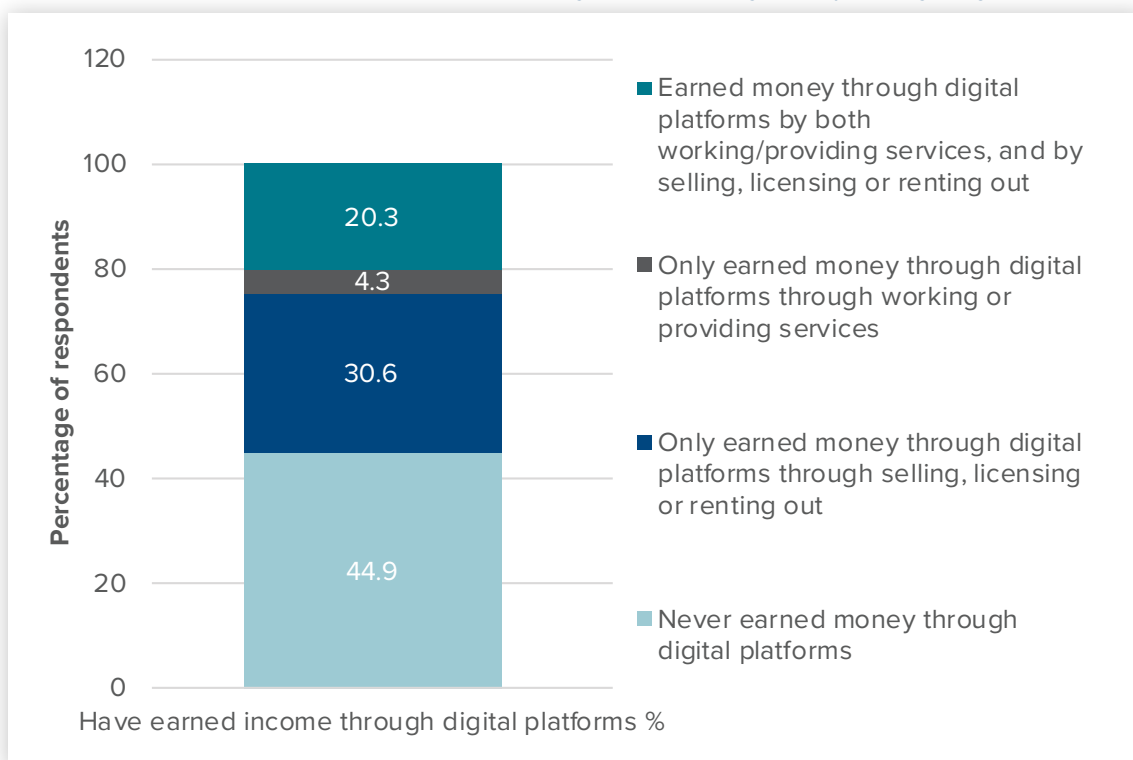
Earning money through digital platforms

More than half (55%) of all survey respondents (n= 8052 of 14608) have earned money in some way through digital platforms, either by working and/or by selling, licensing, or renting out property.

Earlier sections of this report have focussed on the 24.6% of all survey respondents who have earned money by working through digital platforms (Figure 18). Figure 18 further shows that 20.3% of these digital platform workers have also earned money by selling, licensing or renting out property at some time. Of these, 9.9% are currently earning an income by doing both. This figure was only 3.5% in 2019.

Approximately half of all survey respondents⁷⁹ (50.9%) have, at some time, earned an income through selling, licensing or renting out property. The proportion of people who do not do digital platform work but earn an income (only) by selling, licensing or renting out through digital platforms has increased from 25.2% in 2019 to 30.6% in 2023 (Figure 18).

Figure 18. Earning money through digital platforms



It is acknowledged that buying and selling of goods, licensing creative works, renting out premises or leasing out assets online, may involve labour on the part of individuals who undertake these activities. The basis of the transaction, however, is not the provision of labour. As the focus of this survey is the performance of “gig work” through digital platforms, these activities have been distinguished from working or offering services (labour) through platforms. This is consistent with the approach taken by others.⁸⁰ We report here on these different ways of earning money through digital platforms.

It is common for digital platform workers to also use platforms in other ways to earn additional income (Figure 18). Further analysis of respondents who identified as current

⁷⁹ All survey respondents n=14,608

⁸⁰ Report of the Inquiry into the On-demand workforce (14 July 2020) Available at <https://engage.vic.gov.au/inquiry-on-demand-workforce>.

platform workers (n=2059) shows that 84.7% (n=1744 of 2059) have also earned an income through selling, licensing or renting out, while 25.9% of current platform workers have earned an income by doing all three *at some point in time* – selling or licensing property, renting out premises *and* leasing out other assets. This suggests that those who work on digital platforms are also open to other ways of earning money through digital platforms.

Overall, the prevalence of earning money in multiple ways through platforms seems to have increased.

Prevalence and patterns of earning money by selling, licensing or renting out

Table 35 shows that almost half (49.2%)⁸¹ of all survey respondents have never earned money selling, licensing or renting out property through digital platforms, while just over half (50.8%) *have earned money in those ways, either currently or in the past. This is a slight increase on the 42.8% participation rate reported in 2019.*

Around one third (31.1%) of respondents are currently selling, licensing or renting out and almost a quarter (23.4%) of these respondents had also earned money this way more than 12 months ago. A further 7.3% of all respondents are doing one activity now (e.g., selling) and have also done another activity (e.g., renting out) previously.

Table 35. Current, previous or no engagement with selling, licensing or renting out goods or other property through digital platforms (n=14608)

Earns money selling, renting out or licensing through digital platforms	2023 N	2023 %
Has never earned money selling, licensing or renting out through a platform	7186	49.2
Has previously earned money selling, licensing or renting out through a platform, but not in the last 12 months	2890	19.8
Currently or in the last 12 months has earned money selling, licensing or renting out through a platform	3470	23.8
Combination of selling, licensing or renting out activities both in the past and currently	1062	7.3
Total	14608	100.0

As was the case in 2019, excluding working, the most common approach to earning money, either currently or previously (Table 36), is selling or licensing products or one's own possessions through online marketplaces (46.2%), followed by renting out premises (15.2%) and, to a lesser extent, leasing out other property (9.1%) such as car parks, campervans, toys, tools or dresses.

The prevalence of earning an income by selling, licensing or renting out through digital platforms has increased since 2019 across all categories. Interestingly, while fewer respondents overall earn an income by leasing out property, participation in this income-earning category has almost doubled (from 4.7% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2023).

⁸¹ This is consistent with Figure 18 that shows 44.9% of all respondents had never earned money through digital platforms, plus 4.3% of respondents had earned money through working or providing services only, but not by selling, licensing or renting out.

Table 36. Type of activities in selling, renting out or licensing through digital platforms in 2023 (N=14608)

Earned money selling, licensing or renting out through digital platforms 2023	No		Yes, but not in the last 12 months		Yes, currently or within the last 12 months	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
By selling products or your own possessions, or licensing creative works, through online marketplaces	7867	53.9	2670	18.3	4071	27.9
By renting out premises to someone else through digital platforms	12384	84.8	1124	7.7	1100	7.5
By leasing out your campervan, parking space, car (but not driving it) or other goods such as tools, toys or dresses, to someone else through digital platforms	13265	90.8	708	4.8	635	4.3

For all respondents who have sold, licensed or rented out goods or other property, it is most common to have only sold products or their own possessions or licensed creative works through a digital platform and to have never rented out premises or other assets. Of those in our sample who have ever earned an income through selling, licensing or renting out property (n=7422), 63.6% have *only* sold products/possessions or licensed creative works online at some point either currently or in the past and have never used digital platforms to rent out premises or lease out goods or other assets.

Those who currently sell products or license creative works are more likely to be younger (18-34 and 35-49 age groups),⁸² and less likely to reside in the Northern Territory compared to other states.

Respondents currently renting out premises are far more likely to be men,⁸³ and more likely to be younger (18-34 and 35-49 age groups),⁸⁴ to speak a language other than English at home,⁸⁵ and to be permanent or temporary residents compared to Australian citizens.⁸⁶

Very similar demographic patterns were found for those currently renting out premises as for those leasing out other property. Respondents who were currently leasing out other property are more likely to be male,⁸⁷ younger (18-34 and 35-49 age groups),⁸⁸ speak a language other than English at home,⁸⁹ and be permanent or temporary residents compared to Australian citizens.⁹⁰

More than a quarter (25.9%) of current digital platform workers⁹¹ have also earned money (currently or in the past) through doing *all three* (selling/licensing property, renting out premises, and leasing out goods or other assets). Current digital platform workers who have *also* earned money by selling, licensing or renting out through digital platforms are more likely to be doing caring, clerical and data entry, or personal services work, compared to other types of work.

82 χ^2 (8, n=13979), =238.93, p<.001

83 χ^2 (2, n=13979), =79.89, p<.001

84 χ^2 (8, n=13979), =119.82, p<.001

85 χ^2 (4, n=13976), =201.05, p<.001

86 χ^2 (6, n=13975), =225.85, p<.001

87 χ^2 (3, n=13979), =53.14, p<.001

88 χ^2 (12, n=13979), =195.24, p<.001

89 χ^2 (6, n=13976), =192.10, p<.001

90 χ^2 (9, n=13975), =267.65, p<.001

91 n=534 of 2059 current platform workers



8 Conclusion

The findings presented in this report show that participation in digital platform work in Australia has increased between 2019 and 2023. There has been an increase in both the number of individuals in Australia engaging in digital platform work and the frequency of their participation. The considerable proportion of current platform workers who began this form of work in the previous year further supports this trend. Despite this increased engagement, only a small fraction of workers are engaged more than 35 hours per week across all platforms, suggesting that for most, platform work is not full-time employment. The average weekly hours spent on paid platform work has increased since 2019, although a substantial number of workers are uncertain about their exact working hours.

Different types of platform work show varying levels of time commitment, with skilled trades, professional services, and sales and marketing support workers reporting the highest weekly hours. Additionally, platform workers spend a considerable amount of time on unpaid activities related to securing or doing work. The average of 7.3 hours per week on unpaid activities is an increase from 4.9 hours in 2019. This may partly reflect a growing awareness amongst platform workers of the unpaid time required to undertake this form of work. The time spent on unpaid platform activities also highlights the hidden labour and time commitment required to maintain presence and competitiveness in the gig economy.

The Australian digital platform landscape has also expanded and diversified since 2019, with the number of platforms indicated by respondents rising from 102 to nearly 140. Dominant platforms include Airtasker, Uber, Doordash, UberEats, and Amazon Flex which only began operations in Australia in 2020. The majority of work continues to involve driving, transport, and food delivery, but there are growing trends towards other forms of work, such as clerical, creative, care, personal services and education work. The practice of working across multiple platforms, or ‘multi-apping’, has also become more prevalent. Demographic trends show younger workers predominantly in transport and delivery, while older workers are more engaged in caring and professional services. Most workers operate from home, serving a client base that is largely Australian. Perceived employment status among platform workers varies, with the majority identifying as self-employed contractors or freelancers. These shifts indicate a dynamic gig economy, evolving in both the diversity of work and the nature of platform engagement.

Young adults, particularly males and students, are over-represented in participation statistics, while women are significantly under-represented. The flexible nature of platform work appears to attract individuals with dependents and also temporary residents, who show a notably higher engagement compared to Australian citizens. Regional differences in participation are also evident, with Victoria and New South Wales leading in participation rates. This could reflect local economic factors or the availability of platform work in these areas of Australia. The increased involvement of individuals with long-term health conditions or disabilities, as well as non-English speakers, indicates the growing role of digital platform work as a potentially accessible employment option for diverse groups. Those in less stable employment (casual, part-time, or self-employed) are also more likely to engage in platform work, suggesting its importance as a supplementary income source. These trends underscore the need for monitoring participation patterns across demographic groups in order to understand actual or potential labour market inequalities, as well as informing nuanced policies and support tailored to the varied demographics within the digital platform workforce.

In 2023, the income dynamics of digital platform workers in Australia have shown improvement in hourly rates compared to 2019, but with an increased reliance of workers on this income for basic needs. Most workers are paid per task rather than hourly, with a small percentage earning their total income from platform work. A majority earn less than half their total income from platform work, indicating that platform work supplements other income. A significant proportion of respondents consider this additional income as essential or important for their livelihood, possibly due to rising living costs. Estimated hourly earnings are varied. Many platform workers were unable to estimate their average hourly earnings, and the estimated average of \$31.99 per hour does not account for work-related expenses. Income disparities are evident across different types of work, with clerical and data entry roles often earning less, while professional services command higher rates. Despite

improvements in hourly pay rates, challenges remain, including unclear income estimates for many workers, the necessity to cover work-related expenses, and issues with delayed payments, under-payment or non-payment. These findings, in addition to increased overall participation rates, underscore the need for better income transparency and support for workers to achieve a fair income.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced participation in digital platform work in Australia, acting both as a catalyst for new entrants and as a factor in increasing work hours for existing platform workers. During the peak of the pandemic in 2020–2021, a substantial portion of current and past workers reported not engaging in platform work. However, for those who said their digital platform work was impacted by the pandemic, around a quarter of the sample started platform work at this time and one in ten increased their work hours. This was primarily driven by financial necessity. Conversely, some workers, particularly in skilled trades, either reduced their hours or completely ceased platform work, potentially due to the nature of their work or COVID-related restrictions.

Interestingly, skilled trades and writing/translation workers were more likely to shift between different types of platform work during the pandemic. Slightly higher proportions of men than women increased their work hours. A financial need was the primary driver for increasing work hours, particularly for platform workers doing care work or transport and food or other delivery work. The pandemic's impact was also felt differently across demographic groups, with individuals living with disabilities or long-term health conditions more likely to stop platform work. These trends highlight how the pandemic reshaped the gig economy in Australia, with financial pressures and changing work opportunities driving shifts in platform work participation and patterns.

The 2023 survey reveals a nuanced picture of motivations and experiences among workers. The primary motivations for engaging in platform work are the flexibility to choose working hours and location, and the opportunity to earn extra money. This need for flexibility and additional income is particularly pronounced among women, who often start platform work due to financial necessity or to balance caring responsibilities. Workers value the autonomy of being their own boss and making decisions about their work scheduling. However, they express less satisfaction with aspects related to income, such as fair earnings, platform fees, and social elements of their work environment. A notable portion of workers only superficially engage with the terms and conditions of their platforms, and many have experienced restrictions or removal from platforms.

Disputes and complaints are relatively common, often involving clients and payment issues, but most workers don't seek external advice or representation in these matters. Union membership among platform workers is low, and many have not discussed pay and conditions with fellow workers. Health and safety concerns are also significant, with a considerable percentage of workers facing risks, harassment, or bullying. Given the high proportion of workers experiencing risks to health and safety in conducting gig work, together with the evidence of increasing reliance on additional income earned through platform work, it is timely to consider the development of mechanisms for evaluating platform compliance with voluntary standards, such as those developed by the Victorian Government.⁹² The Oxford Internet Institute's Fairwork Foundation provides an example of platform evaluation mechanisms adopted in other international settings.⁹³

⁹² Above n. 14.

⁹³ Refer to <https://fair.work/en/fw/homepage/> and <https://www.oii.ox.ac.uk/research/projects/a-fairwork-foundation-towards-fair-work-in-the-platform-economy/> for more information.

Past workers often left platform work due to low pay or upon finding non-platform employment, with just under half indicating that their platform work experience was somewhat beneficial in securing non-platform jobs. Approximately one third said it did not help at all. This complex landscape of motivations, satisfactions, and challenges paints a picture of digital platform work as a balancing act between flexibility and security for many Australian workers.

Finally, the survey findings indicate a notable trend in the broader Australian digital economy where individuals are increasingly leveraging digital platforms not only for work, but also for other forms of income generation. More than half of the total survey sample have used digital platforms to earn money, either through providing their labour via digital platforms or by engaging in activities such as selling, licensing, or renting out property. Since 2019, there has been a significant increase in the number of people who earn income through these non-work activities on digital platforms. Those currently engaged in digital platform work, particularly in caring, clerical and data entry, or personal services, are more likely to also earn money through these additional means. This trend reflects a broader utilisation of digital platforms in the Australian economy, where individuals are diversifying their income streams beyond traditional employment, leveraging the digital economy's flexibility and accessibility to enhance their financial resilience and opportunities.

An abstract graphic in the upper half of the page features a network of white dots connected by thin white lines, set against a teal background with a green-to-teal gradient. The network is more dense in the center and fades out towards the edges.

Appendix A

The survey instrument

Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey 2023 – QUT / University of Adelaide

Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey

QUT Ethics Approval Number (7033)

A. About this survey

This survey is about work performed through digital platforms. You may know it as **gig work**. Digital platforms are websites and/or apps that connect individual workers to consumers and businesses that need their services on-demand. The service is often short-term (a "gig") and payment for the gig occurs through facilities provided by the platform.

There are a wide variety of platforms that match people with paid services, e.g., Uber, Airtasker, Freelancer, Mable, Fiverr, and many others.

This research explores the extent and nature of participation in gig work across Australia. **We are interested in understanding how Australians seek and obtain work through any digital platforms** (not just the ones we mentioned above). Adults 18 years or over are invited to participate whether or not they have ever used an online platform to obtain work. The research is funded by the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet.

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION FOR QUT RESEARCH PROJECT

What does participation involve?

Participation involves completing this online survey which will take up to 15 minutes.

Example questions are:

"In the last 12 months, through which digital platforms did you work or offer services?"

"On average, how much per hour (in pre-tax Australian dollars) do you get paid for work completed through your main digital platform?"

Your participation is voluntary. Whether you do or don't take part in the survey will not be known to QUT or the funder. If you agree to participate, you do not have to complete any question(s) you are uncomfortable answering. You can withdraw from the research without penalty by exiting the survey before submitting your responses. Once it has been submitted, your survey cannot be withdrawn.

Clicking the consent button and submitting the survey indicates that you understand this information about the research and agree to take part.

What are the possible risks and benefits for me if I take part?

There are minimal risks associated with your participation: mostly minor inconvenience in the time spent answering questions, and possibly discomfort from reflecting on your experiences of platform work if these have been negative. The research outcomes may inform policy development including those protecting the rights of Australian platform workers.

What about privacy and confidentiality?

It will not be possible to identify you at any stage of the research, because personal identifying information is not captured in any response and no traceable information is collected via the server or survey tool. Data collected as part of this research will be stored securely at QUT for a minimum of 5 years. It will be used only in this research. The results will be reported, and the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet will receive a summary of the data but will not be able to identify any individual.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact the Research team lead:

Dr Penny Williams, p54.williams@qut.edu.au, +61 7 3138 0895.

Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey 2023 – QUT / University of Adelaide

What if I have a concern or complaint regarding the conduct of the research project?

QUT is committed to research integrity and the ethical conduct of research projects. To discuss the study with someone not directly involved, particularly in relation to matters concerning policies, information or complaints about the conduct of the study or your rights as a participant, please contact the QUT Research Ethics Advisory Team: +61 7 3138 5123 or humanethics@qut.edu.au.

Thank you for helping with this research project.

Please click this [link](#) to download and print detailed participant information.

This was an online survey developed and hosted in Qualtrics. Individual responses to each question determines the order and how many questions respondents are asked when answering the survey online.

B. Consent: Would you like to continue?

- (a) Yes, I consent to participate.
- (b) No thank you

Screening Questions:

What is your age?

- a. Under 18
- b. 18-34
- c. 35-49
- d. 50-64
- e. 65-74
- f. 75 or older
- g. Prefer not to say

What is your gender?

- a. Male
- b. Female
- c. Intersex/Indeterminate
- d. Other
- e. Prefer not to answer

What Australian State or Territory do you live in?

- a. Australian Capital Territory
- b. New South Wales
- c. Northern Territory
- d. Queensland
- e. South Australia
- f. Tasmania
- g. Victoria
- h. Western Australia

C. Earning income through digital platforms

1. Have you ever earned an income by **selling products or your own possessions, creating content or licensing creative works** through online marketplaces?
E.g., selling goods through Etsy, eBay or other similar platforms, OR licensing music, photos, designs or digital assets through Spotify, Shutterstock, Topsy, Envato Market or similar platforms.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months
 - c. Yes, currently or within the last 12 months.
2. Have you ever earned an income by **renting out premises** to someone else through digital platforms?
E.g., renting out your house or apartment through Airbnb, Stayz or similar, or sharing office space that you personally own through Coworker, Rubberdesk, LiquidSpace or other similar platforms.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months
 - c. Yes, currently or within the last 12 months.
3. Have you ever earned an income by **leasing out your campervan, parking space, car (but not driving it) or other goods such as tools, toys or dresses** to someone else through digital platforms?
E.g., leasing out your property through Camplify, HipCamp, Parkhound, Camptoo, Findacarpark, Uber Carshare, AnyHire, The Volte, Rent a Dress, Tree Hut Village, ToolMates, or other similar platforms.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months
 - c. Yes, currently or within the last 12 months.
4. Have you ever **worked or offered services** through digital platforms where the platform matches you with the client and you are paid via the platform and **you perform the work IN PERSON at a SPECIFIED LOCATION**, rather than via the internet? For example:
 - Driving or delivering packages for Uber, Shebah, Didi, GoPeople, Sherpa or similar
 - Delivering food for Menulog, UberEats, DoorDash or similar
 - Doing cleaning, home maintenance, skilled trades work or odd jobs through Airtasker, HiPages, Whizz or similar
 - Providing care to children, the elderly or pets through Mable, Hireup, Mad Paws, Juggle Street or similar
 - Doing photo shoots or video through Snappr, PhotoSesh, The Right Fit or similar
 - Providing health, fitness and beauty services, massage or adult/personal services through Blys, BeActive, Rendevo, Uberdoo or similar.
 - a. No
 - b. Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months
 - c. Yes, currently or within the last 12 months.
5. Have you ever **worked or offered services** through digital platforms where the platform matches you with the client and you are paid via the platform, but the work is **COMPUTER OR INTERNET-BASED**, rather than done at a specified location? (**but NOT completing online surveys like this one**). For example:
 - Coding or programming through platforms like Mechanical Turk, Toptal, or similar
 - Writing or creating logos, apps or websites for clients through platforms like Fiverr, Freelancer, 99designs or similar
 - Transcribing, translation or administrative services through platforms like Rev, Upwork or similar

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- *Sales, professional or business expertise through platforms like PeoplePerHour, Guru, Expert360 or similar*
- *Commissioned online performances through platforms like FeelitLIVE, Sarah Ashley On-demand or similar*
- *Online tutoring, coaching or mentoring through Tutero, Growth Mentor or similar*

- a. No
- b. Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months
- c. Yes, currently or within the last 12 months.

D. Experience with platform work more than 12 months ago

Section D is completed only if respondent answered “Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months” to both Q4 and Q5 in Section C, or “Yes, but NOT in the last 12 months” to one of them and “No” to the other. That is, they have had experience with platforms but not in the last 12 months. Respondents who answer questions in Section D do not answer questions in Sections E and F and move from Section D to Section G (**General questions about you**).

The following questions are about your previous experiences (**more than 12 months ago**) in offering services or **working** through digital platforms where you and the client were matched digitally, and the payment was via the platform, and **where work was performed on location OR was internet-based, or both**.

*The following questions **exclude** licensing, selling or leasing out property (e.g., through AirBnb, Stayz) and exclude completing online surveys.*

6. Which digital platforms did you previously work or offer services through, **more than 12 months ago**?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| a. 99designs | jj. Mable |
| b. Airtasker | kk. Mad Paws |
| c. Amazon Flex | ll. Menulog |
| d. Amazon Mechanical Turk | mm. Ola |
| e. Appen | nn. Oneflare |
| f. BeActive | oo. Pawshake |
| g. Blys | pp. PeoplePerHour |
| h. Book an Artist | qq. PhotoSesh |
| i. Cambly | rr. Rendevu |
| j. Care.com | ss. Rev |
| k. Careseekers | tt. Sarah Ashley On-demand |
| l. Deliveroo | uu. Shebah |
| m. DiDi | vv. Sherpa |
| n. Doordash | ww. Sidekicker |
| o. Dribbble | xx. Snappr |
| p. Easi | yy. SoulAdvisor |
| q. Expert360 | zz. SuperProf |
| r. FeelitLIVE | aaa. Supp |
| s. Fiverr | bbb. TaskRabbit |
| t. First Tutors | ccc. Taxify |
| u. Foodora | ddd. The Right Fit |
| v. Freelancer | eee. Toptal |
| w. GLG | fff. TRIBE |
| x. Go People | ggg. Tutores |
| y. Growth Mentor | hhh. TutorOcean |
| z. Guru | iii. Uber |
| aa. Helping | jjj. Uber Connect |
| bb. HiPages | kkk. Uberdoo |
| cc. Hireup | lll. UberEats |
| dd. HungryPanda | mmm. Upwork |
| ee. Juggle Street | nnn. Weploy |
| ff. Kiddo | ooo. Whizz |
| gg. Learnmate | ppp. Zoom2U |
| hh. Little Lush Book | qqq. Another platform or platforms <i>Please specify</i> |
| ii. Ivft | |

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rrr.

6a. When you were WORKING OR OFFERING SERVICES through digital platforms, what TYPE OF WORK or services did you commonly offer? (Select **all** that apply)

- a. Caring (e.g., Aged or disability care; Pet services; Babysitting; Nanny services)
 - b. Clerical and data entry (e.g., Customer service; Data entry; Transcription; Tech support; Web research; Virtual assistant)
 - c. Creative and multimedia (e.g., Animation; Architecture; Audio; Logo design; Photography; Presentations; Video production; Voiceovers)
 - d. Driving, transport, and food or other delivery services (e.g., Ride-share, taxi services; Food delivery; Package or goods delivery)
 - e. Education (e.g., Tutoring; Teaching; Mentoring, Online coaching)
 - f. Odd jobs and maintenance work (e.g., Running errands, General maintenance duties; Removalist work)
 - g. Personal services (e.g., Sport/fitness coaching; Massage; Adult entertainment; Tattoo and piercing)
 - h. Professional services (e.g., Accounting; Consulting; Financial planning; Legal services; Human resources; Project management)
 - i. Sales and marketing support (e.g., Social media marketing; Ad posting; Lead generation; Search engine optimization; Telemarketing)
 - j. Skilled trades work (e.g., Carpentry; Plumbing; Electrical work)
 - k. Software development and technology (e.g., Data science; Game development; App, software or web development; Server maintenance; Web scraping)
 - l. Writing and translation (e.g., Academic writing; Article writing; Copywriting; Creative writing; Technical Writing; Translation)
 - m. Other types of services or work
- Please specify _____

7. Thinking about the digital platform work you did **more than 12 months ago**, how often were you providing services?

- a. Daily
- b. At least a few times per week
- c. About once a week
- d. Less than once a week but at least once a month
- e. Less than once a month
- f. I did not get any work

8. Thinking about **more than 12 months ago**, which of the following statements best describes the **income** you previously earned from working through digital platforms?

- a. It was essential for meeting my basic needs
- b. It was an important part of my overall income, but not essential
- c. It was nice to have, but I was able to live without it

9. During 2020-2021, did COVID restrictions, lockdowns or other related impacts affect your work through digital platforms?

- a. No, I wasn't doing any platform work in 2020-2021
- b. No, COVID did NOT affect the hours I was working through platforms
- c. Yes, COVID influenced me to start doing platform work
- d. Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours than previously
- e. Yes, COVID influenced me to work fewer hours than previously
- f. Yes, COVID influenced me to stop doing platform work
- g. Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours on one platform AND fewer hours on another (please explain):

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h. My work was affected in another way (please explain): _____.

10. What was the **MAIN REASON** you worked **MORE HOURS OR STARTED** doing platform work during 2020-2021 as a result of COVID impacts?

- a. I needed the money
- b. I was free to do more work
- c. It got me out of the house
- d. There was more demand for the kind of work I do
- e. Other reason: *free text* _____

11. What was the **MAIN REASON** you worked **FEWER HOURS OR STOPPED** doing platform work during 2020-2021 as a result of COVID impacts?

- a. The type of platform work I do was restricted
- b. I had additional family or caring responsibilities
- c. I worked more in my non-platform work
- d. I was concerned about contracting COVID
- e. I was sick with COVID
- f. There was less demand for the kind of work I do
- g. Other reason: *free text* _____

12. When you stopped working through digital platforms (because of COVID or otherwise) how important were the following reasons:

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not at all important
The work was not enjoyable				
Family or caring responsibilities				
Finding/doing jobs via the platform was too time-consuming				
The pay was too low				
I found other (non-platform) work				
My financial situation improved and I didn't need additional income				
I could not get enough work through platforms				
COVID impacts				
My access was removed or restricted by the platform				
Other reasons (please specify)				

12a. To what extent did working through digital platforms assist you to find other non-platform work?

- a. A great deal
- b. Somewhat
- c. Not at all

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13. Please provide more information that may help us understand why you stopped working or offering services through digital platforms.

Free text _____

14. How long ago did you **START WORKING OR OFFERING SERVICES** through digital platforms?

- a. More than 5 years ago
- b. More than 3 years ago but less than 5 years
- c. 2-3 years ago
- d. More than 1 year ago but less than 2 years ago

15. How important, if at all, were the following reasons in your **original decision** to **start** working through digital platforms?

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not at all important
A financial necessity				
Earning extra money				
Finding regular work				
Finding work that accommodated my health issues or disability				
Finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care)				
Doing work that I enjoyed				
Gaining or improving my knowledge or skills				
Choosing my own tasks or projects				
Working the hours I chose				
Working in a place that I chose				
Working for myself and being my own boss				
Connecting socially with people				
Building my career				
Visa restrictions on my work options				
Helping others				
Finding work that did not require a high level of English skills				
Other motivations (please specify)				

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16. Thinking about when you were working or offering services through digital platforms, how frequently did you experience any of the following?

	Often	A few times	Once	Never
Non-payment				
Under-payment				
Delayed payments				
Sexual harassment by a client				
Race-related harassment by a client				
Bullying by a client				
Work conditions that risked your health or safety				
Restricted access or removal from a platform				

16a. What happened in relation to the payment difficulties you experienced? (e.g., the platform ceased operations in Australia, the client refused to pay)

Free text _____

16b. When your access to the platform was removed or restricted were you given any reasons? What were they?

Free text _____

17. When you were working through digital platforms, did you become involved in **any** kind of complaint or dispute?

- a. Yes
- b. No

17a. Thinking about the **most serious or difficult complaint or dispute** in which you were involved, was it with:

- a. The platform
- b. A client
- c. Both
- d. Neither

17b. Please briefly describe what the complaint or dispute was about.

Free text _____

17c. Was the complaint or dispute dealt with through a formal process organised through the platform?

- a. No
- b. Yes
- c. Unsure

17d. Did you seek advice from another party? (e.g., trade union, small business commission, government helpline)

- a. No
- b. Yes. Please specify where you sought advice _____

17e. Thinking about that complaint or dispute, how satisfied were you with the following:

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	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Unsure
The process for dealing with the complaint or dispute.				
The outcome (if any) of the complaint or dispute.				

18. When you were working through digital platforms, were you a member of any of the following? (Select **all** that apply)
- a. A trade union that covers your type of platform work as well as non-platform work
 - b. An association that specifically represents platform workers
 - c. Neither of the above
19. When you were working through digital platforms, how frequently did you communicate with other platform workers to discuss your pay or working conditions?
- a. Regularly
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never
20. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about your experience with working, or deciding not to work through digital platforms? Please provide your comments below.

Free text _____

E. Recent experience with platform work

Sections E and F are completed only if respondent also answered “Yes, currently or within the last 12 months”, to Q4 and/or Q5 in Section C.

The following questions are about working or offering services through digital platforms where you and the client are matched digitally, and the payment is via the platform and where the **work is performed in-person, on-location, or is internet-based and done online, or both**.

The questions **exclude** creating content, licensing, selling or leasing out property (e.g., through AirBnb, Stayz etc) and exclude completing online surveys.

21. In the last 12 months, through which digital platforms have you **WORKED OR OFFERED SERVICES?** (Please select **all** that apply).

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| a. 99designs | jj. Mad Paws |
| b. Airtasker | kk. Menulog |
| c. Amazon Flex | ll. Ola |
| d. Amazon Mechanical Turk | mm. Oneflare |
| e. Appen | nn. Pawshake |
| f. BeActive | oo. PeoplePerHour |
| g. Blys | pp. PhotoSesh |
| h. Book an Artist | qq. Rendevu |
| i. Cambly | rr. Rev |
| j. Care.com | ss. Sarah Ashley On-demand |
| k. Careseekers | tt. Sheba |
| l. Deliveroo | uu. Sherpa |
| m. DiDi | vv. Sidekicker |
| n. Doordash | ww. Snappr |
| o. Dribbble | xx. SoulAdvisor |
| p. Easi | yy. SuperProf |
| q. Expert360 | zz. Supp |
| r. FeelitLIVE | aaa. TaskRabbit |
| s. Fiverr | bbb. Taxify |
| t. First Tutors | ccc. The Right Fit |
| u. Freelancer | ddd. Toptal |
| v. GLG | eee. TRIBE |
| w. Go People | fff. Tutores |
| x. Growth Mentor | ggg. TutorOcean |
| y. Guru | hhh. Uber |
| z. Helping | iii. Uber Connect |
| aa. HiPages | jjj. Uberdoo |
| bb. Hireup | kkk. UberEats |
| cc. HungryPanda | lll. Upwork |
| dd. Juggle Street | mmm. Weploy |
| ee. Kiddo | nnn. Whizz |
| ff. Learnmate | ooo. Zoom 2 U |
| gg. Little Lush Book | ppp. Another platform or platforms <i>Please specify</i> |
| hh. Lyft | _____ |
| ii. Mable | |

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22. How long ago did you first start working or offering services through digital platforms?
- Less than 6 months ago
 - Between 6 and 12 months ago
 - More than 1 year ago
 - More than 2 years ago
 - More than 3 years ago
 - More than 5 years ago
23. When you are **working or offering** services through digital platforms **how often** do you usually do that?
- Daily
 - At least a few times per week
 - About once a week
 - Less than once a week but at least once a month
 - Less than once a month
24. In an average week, how many hours do you spend doing **paid** work through digital platforms? *Please remember these questions exclude licensing, selling or leasing out property (e.g., through Airbnb, Stayz etc).*
- Less than five hours per week
 - Between 5 and 9 hours per week
 - Between 10 and 15 hours per week
 - Between 16 and 25 hours per week
 - Between 26 and 35 hours per week
 - More than 35 hours per week
25. During 2020-2021, did COVID restrictions, lockdowns or other related impacts affect your work through digital platforms?
- No, I was not doing any platform work in 2020-2021.
 - No, COVID did not affect the hours I worked through platforms
 - Yes, COVID influenced me to start doing platform work
 - Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours than previously
 - Yes, COVID influenced me to work less hours than previously
 - Yes, COVID influenced me to stop doing platform work
 - Yes, COVID influenced me to work more hours on one platform and fewer on another (please explain):
 - My work was affected in another way (please explain): _____.
26. What was the **MAIN REASON** you worked **MORE HOURS OR STARTED** doing platform work during 2020-2021 as a result of COVID impacts?
- I needed the money
 - I was free to do more work
 - It got me out of the house
 - There was more demand for the kind of work I do
 - Other reason: *free text* _____
27. What was the **MAIN REASON** you worked **FEWER HOURS OR STOPPED** doing platform work during 2020-2021 as a result of COVID impacts?
- The type of platform work I do was restricted
 - I had additional family or caring responsibilities

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- c. I worked more in my non-platform work
- d. I was concerned about contracting COVID
- e. I was sick with COVID
- f. There was less demand for the kind of work I do
- g. Other reason: *free text* _____

28. Which of the following statements best describes the **income** you earn from **working or offering services** through digital platforms? *Please only include the income you earn from platform work and exclude income from licensing, selling or leasing out property.*

- a. It is essential for meeting my basic needs
- b. It is an important part of my overall income, but not essential
- c. It is nice to have, but I can live without it
- d. I do not earn any income from digital platform work

29. In the last 12 months, approximately how much of your **total annual income** came from **working** through digital platforms?

- a. Less than 10% of my total annual income
- b. More than 10% but less than half of my total annual income
- c. At least a half but less than 100% of my total annual income
- d. 100% of my total annual income

30. When working or offering services through digital platforms, how frequently have you experienced any of the following?

	Often	A few times	Once	Never
Non-payment				
Underpayment				
Delayed payments				
Sexual harassment by a client				
Race-related harassment by a client				
Bullying by a client				
Work conditions that risked your health or safety				
Restricted access or removal from a platform				

30a. What happened in relation to the payment difficulties you experienced? (e.g., the platform stopped operations in Australia, the client refused to pay)

Free text _____

30b. When your access to the platform was removed or restricted were you given any reasons? What were they?

Free text _____

31. While working or offering services through digital platforms, have you become involved in **any** kind of complaint or dispute?

- a. Yes
- b. No

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31a. Thinking about the **most serious or difficult complaint or dispute** in which you have been involved, was it with:

- a. The platform
- b. A client
- c. Both
- d. Neither

31b. Briefly describe what the complaint or dispute was about.

Free text _____

31c. Was the complaint or dispute dealt with through a formal process organised through the platform?

- a. No
- b. Yes
- c. Unsure

31d. Did you seek advice from another party? (e.g., trade union, small business commission, government helpline)

- a. No
- b. Yes. Please specify where you sought advice _____

31e. Thinking about that complaint or dispute, how satisfied were you with?

	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Unsatisfied	Unsure
The process for dealing with the complaint or dispute.				
The outcome (if any) of the complaint or dispute.				

32. Are you currently a member of any of the following? (Select **all** that apply)

- a. A trade union that covers your type of platform work as well as non-platform work
- b. An association that specifically represents platform workers
- c. Neither of the above

33. How frequently do you communicate with other platform workers to discuss your pay or other working conditions?

- a. Regularly
- b. Sometimes
- c. Never

34. How important were the following reasons in your **original decision** to work or offer services and work through digital platforms?

	Very Important	Important	Slightly Important	Not at all important
A financial necessity				
Earning extra money				
Finding regular work				
Finding work that accommodated my health issues or disability				

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Finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care)				
Doing work that I enjoy				
Gaining or improving knowledge or skills				
Choosing my own tasks or projects				
Working the hours I chose				
Working in a place that I chose				
Working for myself and being my own boss				
Connecting socially with people				
Building my career				
Visa restrictions on my work options				
Helping others				
Finding work that did not require high level English skills				
Other motivations (please specify)				

35. Would you recommend digital platform work to other people?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. I'm not sure

36. Why would you **recommend** or **not recommend** digital platform work? Please provide your comments below.

Free text _____

Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey 2023 – QUT / University of Adelaide

F. Experience with main digital platform work

The following questions are in relation to **one platform**. If you have worked or offered services through multiple platforms, please answer the following questions in relation to the platform through which you have spent the most **time** in the last 12 months. We refer to this as the **main platform**.

If you have only worked for one platform, then that is your main platform.

These questions exclude licensing, selling or leasing out property and completing online surveys.

37. Through which platform did you spend the **most time WORKING OR OFFERING SERVICES** in the last twelve months – your **main digital platform**?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| a. 99designs | jj. Mad Paws |
| b. Airtasker | kk. Menulog |
| c. Amazon Flex | ll. Ola |
| d. Amazon Mechanical Turk | mm. Oneflare |
| e. Appen | nn. Pawshake |
| f. BeActive | oo. PeoplePerHour |
| g. Blys | pp. PhotoSesh |
| h. Book an Artist | qq. Rendevu |
| i. Cambly | rr. Rev |
| j. Care.com | ss. Sarah Ashley On-demand |
| k. Careseekers | tt. Shebah |
| l. Deliveroo | uu. Sherpa |
| m. DiDi | vv. Sidekicker |
| n. Doordash | ww. Snapp |
| o. Dribbble | xx. SoulAdvisor |
| p. Easi | yy. SuperProf |
| q. Expert360 | zz. Supp |
| r. FeelitLIVE | aaa. TaskRabbit |
| s. Fiverr | bbb. Taxify |
| t. First Tutors | ccc. The Right Fit |
| u. Freelancer | ddd. Toptal |
| v. GLG | eee. TRIBE |
| w. Go People | fff. Tutores |
| x. Growth Mentor | ggg. TutorOcean |
| y. Guru | hhh. Uber |
| z. Helping | iii. Uber Connect |
| aa. HiPages | jjj. Uberdoo |
| bb. Hireup | kkk. UberEats |
| cc. HungryPanda | lll. Upwork |
| dd. Juggle Street | mmm. Weploy |
| ee. Kiddo | nnn. Whizz |
| ff. Learnmate | ooo. Zoom 2 U |
| gg. Little Lush Book | ppp. Another platform or platforms <i>Please specify</i> |
| hh. Lyft | _____ |
| ii. Mable | |

38. Which of the following best describes the **type of work or services** you most commonly offer through the **main digital platform**? (Select one)

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- b. Clerical and data entry (e.g., Customer service; Data entry; Transcription; Tech support; Web research; Virtual assistant)
 - c. Creative and multimedia (e.g., Animation; Architecture; Audio; Logo design; Photography; Presentations; Video production; Voiceovers)
 - d. Driving, transport and food delivery or other delivery services (e.g., Ride-share, taxi services; Food delivery; Package or goods delivery)
 - e. Education (Tutoring; Teaching; Mentoring, Online coaching)
 - f. Odd jobs and maintenance work (Running errands, General maintenance duties; Removalist work)
 - g. Personal services (e.g., Sport/fitness coaching; Massage; Adult entertainment; Tattoo and piercing)
 - h. Professional services (e.g., Accounting; Consulting; Financial planning; Legal services; Human resources; Project management)
 - i. Sales and marketing support (e.g., Social media marketing; Ad posting; Lead generation; Search engine optimization; Telemarketing)
 - j. Skilled trades work (Carpentry; Plumbing; Electrical work)
 - k. Software development and technology (e.g., Data science; Game development; App, software or web development; Server maintenance; Web scraping)
 - l. Writing and translation (e.g., Academic writing; Article writing; Copywriting; Creative writing; Technical Writing; Translation)
 - m. Other types of services or work
- Please specify _____

39. On what basis do you get paid (or would you get paid, if you haven't earned any income yet) for your **work** through the **main** digital platform? If several methods apply, select the one which is most common.

- a. I am paid per completed task or job
- b. I am paid for the time or hours I work
- c. I receive a fixed daily/weekly/monthly income
- d. A combination of some or all of the above
- e. I don't know

40. Have you received any of the following for your work through the main digital platform? (Select all that apply)

- a. Monetary bonuses paid through the platform
- b. Allowances to cover expenses such as tools, fuel or internet costs
- c. Reduced platform fees or platform membership discounts
- d. Vouchers or gift cards for products or services
- e. Free meals
- f. No, I have not received any of these benefits
- g. I received other benefits: Free text _____

41. On your main digital platform, how many **hours in an average week** do you spend doing **unpaid tasks** such as time logged on waiting for work, searching, quoting or bidding for work, updating your profile, posting information or communicating with prospective clients.

- a. _____ hours per week
- b. I don't know

42. On your main digital platform, how many hours in an average week do you spend doing **paid work**?

- a. _____ hours per week
- b. I don't know

43. On average, how much per hour (in pre-tax Australian dollars) do you get paid for work completed through your main digital platform? (excluding all unpaid tasks)

.....

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- b. \$ _____ per hour
- c. I don't know

44. Do you pay for any of the following to do work through your main digital platform? (Select **all** that apply)

- a. Certifications (e.g., Police checks, working with children checks, professional association memberships)
- b. Cleaning products
- c. Fuel
- d. Insurance costs
- e. Printing or paper costs
- f. Public transport costs
- g. Tools and equipment
- h. Training courses
- i. Vehicle maintenance (e.g., cars, trucks, bikes, vans)
- j. Work clothing
- k. Work-related software costs (purchases or subscriptions)
- l. I pay for other things. *Please specify* _____
- m. No, I don't pay for anything

45. Please answer the following questions about how your **main digital platform** operates.

	YES	NO	I DO NOT KNOW
The platform covers me with at least one type of work-related insurance (e.g., for work-related injuries, professional indemnity)			
The platform has a dispute settlement process			
The platform has a person available that I can contact if I have a problem or concern			
The platform allows clients to rate my work			
The platform allows me to rate the clients for whom I work			
The platform allows me to provide feedback about the platform itself, its website, app or processes			
The platform charges me a fee (e.g., a subscription cost) to register or access any work			
The platform charges for priority work opportunities			
The platform requires me to pay a set amount or percentage of what I earn through the platform			
The platform requires me to display its brand or logo (e.g., on clothing, equipment or documents) when performing work or dealing with clients			
I am required by the platform to be available to work either at particular times, or for at least a minimum amount of time			
The platform penalises me for declining work			
The platform allows me to arrange for someone else to do the work I have accepted			
The platform allows me to work for a client that I originally met through the platform, without having to use the platform			
The platform can restrict my access to work opportunities if my work is not satisfactory			
The platform provides the equipment or facilities (e.g., computer, internet access,			

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46. Have you read the platform's terms and conditions?
- a. Yes, I read them in detail
 - b. I skim read them
 - c. No
 - d. I can't remember
47. How well do you understand the terms and conditions of the platform?
- a. Very well
 - b. Fairly well
 - c. A little
 - d. Not at all.
48. Does the platform notify you when the terms and conditions change?
- a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No
 - d. I don't know
49. What do you consider to be your work status on your main digital platform?
- a. I am an employee
 - b. I am a self-employed contractor or freelancer
 - c. I don't know.
50. On your main digital platform, where are your clients located?
- a. Australia only
 - b. Overseas only
 - c. Both Australia and overseas
 - d. I don't know
51. In which State or Territory are these clients most commonly located?
- a. Queensland
 - b. New South Wales
 - c. Victoria
 - d. Tasmania
 - e. South Australia
 - f. Western Australia
 - g. Northern Territory
 - h. Australian Capital Territory
 - i. I don't know
52. In which country are these clients most commonly located?

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b. _____ (drop down selection of Australian States and Territories and countries)

54. When I complete work tasks through the **main digital platform**, I am most often located:

- a. At home in a dedicated work space
- b. At home in a shared living space
- c. At my non-platform workplace
- d. At another location chosen by me (e.g., café, library, coworking hub)
- e. Travelling in my car or van or on my bike
- f. In the private home of my individual client
- g. On the premises of my business client
- h. At another location chosen by my client
- i. Other *please specify*: _____

55. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements regarding your work on the **main digital platform**.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The income I earn is fair					
I have the ability to set the price for my services					
I understand how my pay is calculated					
The fees, costs or commissions associated with work are fair					
I can find regular work through the platform					
I can find work through the platform that accommodates my health issues or disability					
The rating system on the platform is fair					
The competition for work is reasonable					
I have the chance in my work to get to know other people					
I have the opportunity to meet with others in my work					
My work requires a variety of skills					
I can decide on my own how to go about doing my work					
I can work the hours I choose					
I can make my own decisions about how to schedule my work					
I can work at the pace I choose					
I can plan how I do my work					
I can use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work					
The work allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own					

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I can work for myself and be my own boss					
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work					
I enjoy the work that I do					

G. General questions about you

56. Excluding any work through digital platforms, which of the following best describes your current situation?

- a. Employee or self-employed
- b. Unemployed (or would be unemployed if not for platform work)
- c. Student
- d. Retired
- e. Full-time homemaker or unpaid carer
- f. Volunteer
- g. Other not in the labour force

56a. How long have you been unemployed?

- a. Less than 6 months
- b. More than 6 months but less than 1 year
- c. More than 1 year

57. What is your current employment status in your **main job** (excluding any platform work)?

- a. Full-time permanent/ongoing employee
- b. Part-time permanent/ongoing employee
- c. Casual employee
- d. Fixed term contract
- e. Self-employed without employees
- f. Self-employed with employees
- g. I have some other type of arrangement

58. Excluding any platform work, would you like to work more hours in your main job if they were offered to you?

- a. Yes, I would like more hours in my main job.
- b. No, my current hours are sufficient.

59. Which of the following best describes your occupation or job title in your **main job** (excluding any platform work)?

- a. Managers
 - i. Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators
 - ii. Farmers and Farm Managers
 - iii. Specialist Managers
 - iv. Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers
- b. Professionals
 - i. Arts and Media Professionals
 - ii. Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals
 - iii. Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals
 - iv. Education Professionals
 - v. Health Professionals
 - vi. ICT Professionals

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- c. Technicians and trades workers
 - i. Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians
 - ii. Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers
 - iii. Construction Trades Workers
 - iv. Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers
 - v. Food Trades Workers
 - vi. Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers
 - vii. Other Technicians and Trades Workers
- d. Community and personal service workers
 - i. Health and Welfare Support Workers
 - ii. Carers and Aides
 - iii. Hospitality Workers
 - iv. Protective Service Workers
 - v. Sports and Personal Service Workers
- e. Clerical and administrative workers
 - i. Office Managers and Program Administrators
 - ii. Personal Assistants and Secretaries
 - iii. General Clerical Workers
 - iv. Inquiry Clerks and Receptionists
 - v. Numerical Clerks
 - vi. Clerical and Office Support Workers
 - vii. Other Clerical and Administrative Workers
- f. Sales workers
 - i. Sales Representatives and Agents
 - ii. Sales Assistants and Salespersons
 - iii. Sales Support Workers
- g. Machinery operators and drivers
 - i. Machine and Stationary Plant Operators
 - ii. Mobile Plant Operators
 - iii. Road and Rail Drivers
 - iv. Storepersons
- h. Labourers
 - i. Cleaners and Laundry Workers
 - ii. Construction and Mining Labourers
 - iii. Factory Process Workers
 - iv. Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers
 - v. Food Preparation Assistants
 - vi. Other Labourers

60. Have you ever held a paid job (excluding any platform work)?

- a. Yes
- b. No

61. In your most recent job (excluding any platform work), which of the following best describes your occupation or job title?

- i. Managers
 - i. Chief Executives, General Managers and Legislators
 - ii. Farmers and Farm Managers
 - iii. Specialist Managers
 - iv. Hospitality, Retail and Service Managers
- i. Professionals

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- ii. Business, Human Resource and Marketing Professionals
 - iii. Design, Engineering, Science and Transport Professionals
 - iv. Education Professionals
 - v. Health Professionals
 - vi. ICT Professionals
 - vii. Legal, Social and Welfare Professionals
- k. Technicians and trades workers
 - i. Engineering, ICT and Science Technicians
 - ii. Automotive and Engineering Trades Workers
 - iii. Construction Trades Workers
 - iv. Electrotechnology and Telecommunications Trades Workers
 - v. Food Trades Workers
 - vi. Skilled Animal and Horticultural Workers
 - vii. Other Technicians and Trades Workers
- l. Community and personal service workers
 - i. Health and Welfare Support Workers
 - ii. Carers and Aides
 - iii. Hospitality Workers
 - iv. Protective Service Workers
 - v. Sports and Personal Service Workers
- m. Clerical and administrative workers
 - i. Office Managers and Program Administrators
 - ii. Personal Assistants and Secretaries
 - iii. General Clerical Workers
 - iv. Inquiry Clerks and Receptionists
 - v. Numerical Clerks
 - vi. Clerical and Office Support Workers
 - vii. Other Clerical and Administrative Workers
- n. Sales workers
 - i. Sales Representatives and Agents
 - ii. Sales Assistants and Salespersons
 - iii. Sales Support Workers
- o. Machinery operators and drivers
 - i. Machine and Stationary Plant Operators
 - ii. Mobile Plant Operators
 - iii. Road and Rail Drivers
 - iv. Storepersons
- p. Labourers
 - i. Cleaners and Laundry Workers
 - ii. Construction and Mining Labourers
 - iii. Factory Process Workers
 - iv. Farm, Forestry and Garden Workers
 - v. Food Preparation Assistants
 - vi. Other Labourers

62. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

○ ☐ Less than Year 10

○ ☐ Year 10

○ ☐ Year 11

○ ☐ Year 12

○ ☐ TAFE or other vocational training

○ ☐ Bachelor's degree

○ ☐ Master's degree

○ ☐ Doctoral degree

○ ☐ Other

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63. Which of the following best describes your current circumstances?

- a. Single, no children
- b. Single with at least one child living with you
- c. Single with one or more children, none of whom live with you
- d. Couple without children
- e. Couple with at least one child living with you
- f. Couple with one or more children, none of whom live with you
- g. Other

64. How many people who live with you are economically dependent on you?

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 or more

65. What was your personal taxable (pre-tax) income in Australian dollars last financial year? Please consider all your sources of income, including salary, income from sub-letting, pensions, trusts, royalties, allowances, interest, dividends or any other sources relevant to you.

- a. Nil income
- b. \$1-\$9,999
- c. \$10,000 - \$20,000
- d. \$20,001 - \$40,000
- e. \$40,001 - \$60,000
- f. \$60,001 - \$80,000
- g. \$80,001 - \$100,000
- h. \$100,001-\$150,000
- i. \$150,001 or more
- j. I don't know
- k. I prefer not to answer

66. What is your Australian residency status?

- a. Australian citizen
- b. Permanent resident
- c. Temporary resident
- d. Prefer not to say
- e.

67. What best describes the type of Visa you have?

- a. Working holiday
- b. Student
- c. Family reunion
- d. Skilled work
- e. Refugee or humanitarian
- f. Other *please specify*: _____

68. Do you speak a language other than English at home?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

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69. Are you of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin? (A person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent identifies as such and is accepted as such by the community with which they are associated.)

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

70. Do you live with a long-term health condition or disability?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Prefer not to say

70a. Please indicate the category that best fits your circumstances from the list below.

- a. Intellectual/cognitive or learning
- b. Physical/mobility
- c. Acquired brain injury/neurological
- d. Mental health
- e. Vision
- f. Hearing
- g. Speech
- h. If not listed above, please describe here: _____
- i. Prefer not to say

71. What is your year of birth?

72. What is the Postcode of the area in which you currently live?

End of Survey

Thank you for completing the “Digital Platform (Gig) Work in Australia Survey, 2023”.

If you have experienced discomfort or distress as a result of participation in this survey, Lifeline provides access to online, phone or face-to-face support, call 13 11 14 for 24-hour telephone crisis support.



Appendix B

Data screening

Screening for low quality data arising from insufficient effort or gamed responses is an important step to mitigate concerns about the reliability of data sourced from online research panels. Estimates of low-quality data vary but a typical range is considered 5% to 10% of responses.⁹⁴

We adopted the following data screening steps, in line with the findings of DeSimone and Harms.⁹⁵

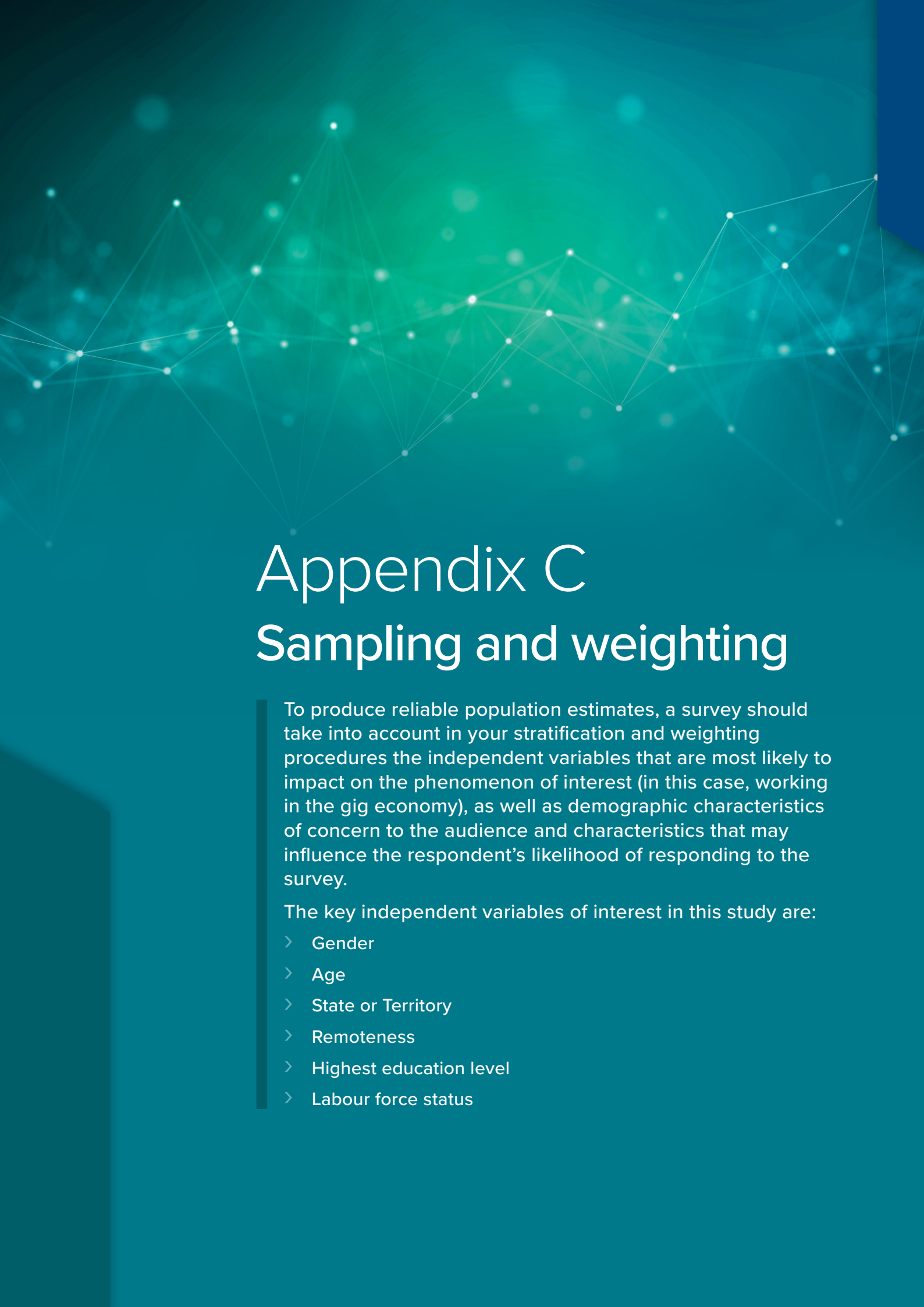
⁹⁴ DeSimone, J.A. & Harms, P.D. (2018). Dirty data: The effects of screening respondents who provide low-quality data in survey research. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 33(5), 559-577

⁹⁵ Ibid.

Data screening steps

Issue to be addressed	Method of identifying	No of responses identified	Remaining responses
Starting number of responses			20815
Not an ORU panelist	Missing valid ID field response	15	20800
Delete non consents	Answer no to consent question	1503	19297
Delete screenouts (1)	Under 18	61	19236
Delete screenouts (2)	75 and over	422	18814
Delete screenouts (3)	Age not provided	1070	17744
Delete over quota screenouts	Was not asked first question after demographic screens	1683	16061
Delete incomplete responses	Not marked as "Finished" in Qualtrics dataset	431	15630
Delete duplicate values	Match to ORU-created ID, mark first response as original, others as duplicate	408	15222
Insufficient effort (1)	Number of consecutive identical responses – Huang et al. (2012) recommends flagging seven, seven, twelve, ten, and eight SD, D, NA, A, SA in a row We identified cases where the respondent gave the same answers to all questions in at least 2 out of 3 question blocks: Motivation (Q24, 15 items) Regulation (Q31, 22 items) Satisfaction (Q37, 19 items)	515	14707
Insufficient effort (2)	Low response time. More than two standard deviations from the median duration it taken to complete the survey.	0	14707
Bot detection via reCAPTURE	recapture scores less than 0.5	75	14632
Bot detection via panel review	A panel of research team members reviewed critical free text fields to detect nonsensical input	24	14608

Consecutive identical responses are well suited to this analysis in particular because in many instances we are assessing different constructs in the same bank of questions. For example, there are a range of different motivations for participating in platform work which we would expect an attentive respondent to answer differently; and there are many different aspects of how platform work is performed which we do not expect to be consistent within and across platform types.



Appendix C

Sampling and weighting

To produce reliable population estimates, a survey should take into account in your stratification and weighting procedures the independent variables that are most likely to impact on the phenomenon of interest (in this case, working in the gig economy), as well as demographic characteristics of concern to the audience and characteristics that may influence the respondent's likelihood of responding to the survey.

The key independent variables of interest in this study are:

- > Gender
- > Age
- > State or Territory
- > Remoteness
- > Highest education level
- > Labour force status

These are personal characteristics known to correlate with internet access and usage in Australia.⁹⁶

Panel provider ORU maintains robust data on participant's gender, age, and State or Territory of residence, so were therefore able to stratify the sample on that basis. The sample was divided up by age (18-34, 35-49, 50-64, 65-74), gender (male, female), and State/Territory of residence and quotas set for each stratum, based on an overall target sample of 15,000 respondents. This was based on the sample size calculations conducted for the 2019 survey and estimated participation rates.

As discussed in the report, while the final sample was representative by State/Territory, age, and gender, it was slightly biased toward respondents with post-school qualifications and respondents in major cities. A weight was calculated using data from the ABS May 2018 Survey of Education and Work. Weights were calculated on the following strata: Age x Gender x Highest Education Level.

With this initial weight applied, the bias for highest education level was reduced and the bias for remoteness was also reduced. The representativeness by age, gender and State/Territory was maintained. Given likely covariance between remoteness and highest education level, it was determined not to apply any additional weighting to avoid overcorrection. Weight values varied between 0.43 and 5.89, with a mean value of 1.45 and a median value of 1.10. Applying weights increased the incidence of platform work by approximately .1%, consistent with the expected relationship between platform work and highest education level. Due to these small differences, and for ease of interpretation, unweighted results have been presented throughout this report.

⁹⁶ Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) (2018). Household use of information technology, Australia, 2016-17. Cat. no. 8146.0. ABS: Canberra, Table 1.

An abstract graphic in the upper half of the slide features a network of white dots connected by thin white lines, set against a teal background with a subtle bokeh effect. The network is more dense on the left and right sides, with a few lines crossing the center.

Appendix D

Multi-nominal logistic regression

Table D.1. Multi-nomial logistic regression (participation in digital platform work)

	Former platform worker			Current platform worker		
	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.
Intercept	.142		<.001	.134		<.001
Age (ref cat: 18-34)						
35 – 49	.070	.444	<.001	.063	.330	<.001
50 – 64	.092	.222	<.001	.089	.144	<.001
65 – 74	.179	.160	<.001	.205	.089	<.001
Gender (ref cat: male)						
Female	.059	.681	<.001	.054	.570	<.001
Intersex/Indeterminate	.675	2.712	.139	.689	1.812	.388
Other	.623	2.327	.175	.596	1.977	.253
Prefer not to answer	.816	.384	.241	1.087	.171	.104
State/Territory (ref cat: Vic)						
ACT	.234	.635	.052	.216	.523	.003
NSW	.074	1.035	.646	.068	.961	.559
NT	.319	.995	.987	.339	.758	.414
QLD	.087	.919	.331	.079	.901	.185
SA	.135	.592	<.001	.121	.590	<.001
TAS	.241	.801	.356	.204	1.196	.380
WA	.106	.815	.055	.098	.725	.001
Location (ref cat: Major city)						
Inner Regional	.093	.917	.354	.090	.804	.015
Outer Regional	.154	.711	.027	.156	.533	<.001
Remote	.380	.673	.297	.404	.498	.084
Very Remote	.597	1.407	.568	.778	.698	.644
Dependents (ref category: no dependents)						
Has one or more financial dependents	.061	1.657	<.001	.056	2.015	<.001
Residency (ref cat: Aus citizen)						
Permanent	.100	1.514	<.001	.095	1.321	.003
Temporary	.137	2.128	<.001	.125	2.074	<.001
Prefer not to say	.272	1.089	.753	.241	1.338	.227
NESB status (ref cat: not NESB)						
Yes	.071	1.449	<.001	.064	1.530	<.001
Prefer not to say	.257	2.858	<.001	.272	1.872	.021
ATSI Status						

	Former platform worker			Current platform worker		
	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.
Yes	.130	2.590	<.001	.122	2.692	<.001
Prefer not to say	.275	1.225	.461	.273	1.258	.399
Disability status (ref cat: no disability)						
Yes	.084	1.121	.174	.079	1.205	.018
Prefer not to say	.211	1.692	.013	.213	1.486	.063
Highest education level (ref cat: Less than Year 12)						
Grade 12	.138	1.010	.944	.131	1.153	.278
Vocational	.127	1.063	.629	.123	1.056	.657
Bachelor	.129	1.055	.677	.123	1.194	.151
Postgraduate	.136	1.036	.792	.130	1.065	.629
Labour force status (ref cat: employed)						
Unemployed	.131	1.300	.046	.131	.911	.477
Student	.126	1.156	.252	.111	1.085	.465
Retired	.173	.569	.001	.217	.295	<.001
Homemaker/Carer	.138	.862	.282	.148	.523	<.001
Volunteer	.284	1.713	.058	.299	1.205	.532
Other	.251	.557	.020	.298	.287	<.001

Reference category: never participated in platform work.

Source: Survey of digital economy. N= 14,608

Table D.2. Multi-nomial logistic regression (influence of employment status on participation in digital platform work)

	Former platform worker			Current platform worker		
	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.	SE	Exp(B)	Sig.
Intercept	.038		<.001	.034		<.001
Employment status (ref cat: full-time permanent/ongoing employee)						
Part-time permanent/ongoing employee	.087	1.071	.433	.076	1.181	.028
Casual	.140	.828	.179	.099	1.586	<.001
Fixed-term contract	.249	.950	.835	.203	1.203	.364
Self-employed without employees	.137	.908	.481	.103	1.463	<.001
Self-employed with employees	.256	.566	.026	.174	1.086	.634
I have some other type of arrangement	.400	1.706	.182	.382	1.490	.296

Reference category: never participated in platform work.



Appendix E

Gender analysis

Current workers

Summary of statistically significant items (satisfaction with digital platform work)

		Male Mean	Female Mean
I have the ability to set the price for my services	t(2030)=-2.955, p= .003	3.39	3.54
I understand how my pay is calculated	t(1797.42)=-2.443, p= .015	3.74	3.84
I can find work through the platform that accommodates my health issues or disability	t(2027)=-2.335, p= .020	3.49	3.59
I can use my personal initiative or judgement in carrying out the work	t(1853.46)=-2.500, p= .013	3.90	4.00
The work allows me to make a lot of decisions on my own	t(1803.94)=-3.034, p= .002	3.82	3.94
I can work from home or another place that I choose	t(1791.31)=-2.768, p= .006	3.57	3.72
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do the work	t(1781.01)=-2.374, p= .018	3.85	3.95
I enjoy the work that I do	t(2020)=-2.261, p= .024	3.77	3.86

Summary of statistically significant items (motivation with digital platform work)

		Male Mean	Female Mean
A financial necessity	t(2037)=-2.519, p= .012	2.7	2.81
Earning extra money	t(2038)=-3.389, p= .001	3.08	3.21
Finding regular work	t(2038)=-2.334, p= .020	2.53	2.64
Finding work that accommodated my caring responsibilities (e.g., childcare or elder care)	t(1717.352)=-3.673, p= .001	2.18	2.37
Building my career	t(2030)=-2.078, p= .038	2.47	2.57
Helping others	t(1790.666)=-3.665, p= .001	2.59	2.75
Doing work that I enjoy	t(1777.383)=-3.719, p= .001	2.83	2.99
Working the hours I choose	t(2033)=-2.624, p= .009	3.10	3.21
Working in a place that I choose	t(2032)=-3.596, p= .001	2.96	3.11

Gender breakdown of income bands

Amount per hour	Female		Male	
	N	%	N	%
Zero dollars	2	.5	2	.3
\$0.01 - \$9.99	24	5.7	24	3.5
\$10.00 - \$14.99	21	5.0	21	3.0
\$15.00 - \$19.99	21	5.0	59	8.5
\$20.00 - \$29.99	108	25.5	200	28.9
\$30.00 - \$39.99	91	21.5	128	18.5
\$40.00 - \$49.99	36	8.5	55	8.0
\$50.00 - \$74.99	53	12.5	89	12.9
\$75.00 - \$99.99	12	2.8	16	2.3
\$100 or more	56	13.2	97	14.0
Do not know				
Total	424	100.0	691	100.0



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