

Clerks – Working from Home Surveys

An investigation into access to work from home arrangements under the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020

May 2025

Executive Summary

In February 2025, the Fair Work Commission (the Commission) engaged Swinburne University of Technology to undertake a quantitative research study to provide evidence of current work from home (WFH) practices by employers and employees under the *Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020* (Clerks Award), to support the research and consultation process for the development of a WFH term for the Clerks Award.

The objective of the study was to gather information from employers using the Clerks Award in their workplace and employees working in roles covered by the Clerks Award about their perspectives and practices of WFH arrangements. This included collecting information about current WFH policies and practices offered, reasons for enabling or not enabling WFH, employer level barriers to WFH uptake and access to WFH arrangements, and the impact and use of the Clerks Award including relevant clauses that enable or dissuade WFH offerings.

Two online surveys were conducted in April 2025, one involving n=398 Employers of workers typically covered by the Clerks Award, and n=799 employees working in roles that are typically covered by the Clerks Award.

The scope of this research is limited to employees covered by and employers using the Clerks Award. Findings should be interpreted in this context. The key findings from the two surveys are as follows.

Employer Survey

- 55% of employers offered WFH for all or most clerical roles, 25% offer it to some employees on a case-by-case basis, and 20% rarely or did not offer WFH.
- Employees from 49% of employers had flexible start/finish times, 19% rarely or did not offer this.
- 52% of employers say working hours do not change when employees WFH, 22% say working hours tend to decrease while 26% said they 'occasionally' or 'always' increase.
- 77% of employers who had received a WFH request said that no requests or a minority of requests were denied, 11% indicated some WFH requests were denied, while the remainder reported denying most or all WFH requests.
- Primary reasons for employers declining WFH requests are due to concerns about 'productivity' (35%) or 'employee ability to work remotely' (20%), 'because work tasks cannot be performed at home' (24%) or 'as it would be difficult to change other employees' working arrangements' (22%).
- Conversely, the primary reasons for approving WFH requests are due to 'improved productivity/efficiency' (42%), 'because the organisation offers WFH as a standard practice' (40%) or because 'the organisation has supportive flexible work policies' (37%).
- Employer level barriers to WFH uptake are that the role cannot be performed remotely (43%) or requires in-person client interaction (28%), and collaboration is more difficult remotely (36%).

- Other reasons WFH may not be accessed include managerial preferences, legacy management styles that rely on visibility to override productivity concerns, company policies, and the absence of a right to WFH.

Employee Survey

- Two-thirds (66%) of all employees surveyed indicated being able to WFH to some extent, with over half (52%) currently doing so.
- 46% of employees were found to have requested WFH arrangements. 64% of these WFH requests were approved, 30% were partially approved while 6% of WFH requests were declined. 11% of employees were able to WFH without requesting permission, 13% had not made a request but had been WFH since COVID-19, 18% do not currently WFH but would like to, whilst 13% of employees said they did not want to WFH.
- 86% of employees who have the ability to WFH said it had a positive impact on their work-life balance, 76% said it had a positive impact on their mental health, and 67% said it had a positive impact on their physical health.
- Employees aged 25-34 are most likely to have a WFH request approved (35%), whilst employees over 45 are more likely to be able to WFH without formal approval compared with younger colleagues.
- 'Female managers/Senior administrators' are the employees most likely to have had a WFH request declined (7%), whilst female employees (4.4%) are 7.3 times more likely overall to have had a WFH request declined than male employees (0.6%). However, female employees (13%) are more likely to be able to WFH without seeking formal approval than male employees (9%).
- Two-thirds (67%) of the employees working in eligible roles were found to have at least heard about the Clerks Award, but only 16% said they knew 'a lot' about it, whilst the remaining third (34%) indicated they 'did not know anything' about the Clerks Award.
- Employees in the 'Professional, Scientific and Technical Services' sector (46%) are more than twice as likely to know they are covered by the Clerks Award than employees working in 'Retail Trade' (22%).
- 40% of employees said they worked longer hours when WFH, compared with only 13% who said they worked fewer hours when WFH.
- Male employees are more likely to work outside the Clerks Award ordinary hours than female employees, particularly after 7pm on weekdays (31% versus 20%) and before 7am on Saturdays (18% versus 11%).
- Weekly income was not found to impact access to WFH arrangements, with the lowest earners (42%) being just as likely to have WFH arrangements as the highest earners (40%).
- Female employees (52%) were more likely than male employees (39%) to identify 'household management' as a WFH benefit.

This study provides comprehensive insights into current WFH practices under the Clerks Award, highlighting significant trends, barriers, and demographic differences. These findings will inform the development of relevant terms under the Clerks Award and provide insights that support the research and consultation process for the development of a WFH term for the Clerks Award.

Based on the findings from both surveys, final observations from the Swinburne research team that may have particular impact include; the fact there is a group of employees under the Clerks Award who do not currently WFH but would like to, the practice of employees working additional hours when employees WFH under the Clerks Award, how certain roles under the Clerks Award cannot currently be performed remotely, and how perceptions of performance affect WFH under the Clerks Award.

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1. Introduction



1. Introduction

In the Modern Awards Review 2023-2024 (AM2023/21) (the Review) the Commission identified developing a facilitative 'working from home term' in the *Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020* (Clerks Award) as one of six priority areas. As an outcome of the Review, the Commission is exploring whether to introduce a term to facilitate employers and employees making workable arrangements for working from home (WFH) (see AM2024/34; [2024] FWCFB 357 at [3]).

In February 2025, the Commission engaged Swinburne University of Technology (Swinburne University) to undertake a quantitative research study to provide evidence of current WFH practices by employers and employees under the Clerks Award to inform the development of a term.

This research (called WFH Surveys) includes:

1. A survey of employers who use the Clerks Award, and
2. A survey of employees who are covered by the Clerks Award.

1.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The research objectives of this report are to gather information from employers about:

- Current WFH policies and practices offered
- Reasons for enabling or not enabling WFH
- Any employer level barriers to WFH uptake and access to WFH arrangements
- The impact and use of industrial instruments (such as the Clerks Award) and relevant clauses that enable or dissuade WFH offerings
- Other employer experiences and perceptions of WFH

And to gather information from employees about:

- Awareness of WFH policies and practices offered by their employer
- Reasons for WFH or not WFH
- Current WFH practices amongst clerical employees
- Any employee level barriers to WFH uptake and access
- The impact and use of industrial instruments (such as the Clerks Award) and relevant clauses to enable or dissuade WFH offerings
- Other employee experiences and perceptions of WFH

The aim of this report is to provide insights that support the research and consultation process for the development of a WFH term for the Clerks Award.

1.2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON CLERKS AWARD

The Clerks Award is one of 121 modern awards established by the Commission that sets out the minimum pay rates and conditions of employment in an occupation or industry. It covers employees in clerical roles whose employers are not covered by another award with clerical job classifications.

The Clerks Award covers work ranging from routine administrative tasks to work requiring specialised knowledge and/or the training and supervision of other employees. Typical tasks might include reception or switchboard duties, word processing, operating office equipment, using payroll and other software, recordkeeping, maintaining inventories, preparing financial and tax records, and providing executive support. The Clerks Award also covers call centre employees.

The Clerks Award sets out job classifications, minimum pay rates, and other entitlements including rostering provisions, maximum working hours, overtime and penalty rates, leave and dispute resolution processes. Like other modern awards, the Clerks Award, in conjunction with the National Employment Standards (NES), provides a safety net of minimum terms and conditions of employment for employees covered by the award.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides historical context for this research. While WFH provisions are not a current feature of modern awards, a separate schedule was temporarily inserted into the Clerks Award during the COVID-19 pandemic to facilitate WFH and other remote working arrangements ([2020] FWCFB 1690). Schedule I was initially inserted into the Clerks Award in March 2020. This schedule gave employers more flexibility with regards to working hours and remote work. The Commission extended the operation of these changes in October 2020 and December 2020 respectively. Schedule I ceased operation on 30 June 2021. This outcome was supported by the interested parties, who had written to the Commission in April 2021 requesting the Commission discontinue the matter ([2021] FWCFB 3653). No subsequent matters have considered specific WFH terms.

The findings reported here provide an updated picture about how WFH practices under the Clerks Award may have changed since 2020. To address a lack of data regarding employer experiences under Schedule I, the Commission oversaw a survey of employers covered by the Clerks Award in 2020 to understand their WFH practices and impediments to WFH (Fair Work Commission, 2021). This survey collected data from 123 employers covered by the Clerks Award.

As noted in the Introduction, these proceedings follow from the Review, where the Commission flagged WFH arrangements under two areas/streams of review: making awards easier to use and work and care.

As stated in the Final Report of the Review, the Commission intends to develop a WFH term in the Clerks Award that 'facilitates employers and employees making workable arrangements for working at home and removes any existing award impediments to such arrangements' ([167]). The Commission decided to begin with the Clerks Award, because it is the 'most commonly used award under which WFH is most likely to occur' (Final Report at [167]). The *Work and Care Data Profile* (Fair Work Commission, 2024) indicates that, in

2023, 41.4% of clerical and administrative employees regularly worked from home, compared to 31.5% of employees overall. The Review notes that the Clerks Award revisions could serve as a model for other awards ([167]).

In August 2024, the Commission initiated proceedings to develop a WFH term in the Clerks Award, and in subsequent statements indicated the need for current research on this subject, including the employer and employee surveys discussed in this report (see [AM2024/34](#) for further information).

2. Methods



2. Methods

The method adopted for this research was to conduct online surveys with employers and employees, to capture insights related to the Clerks Award. These surveys were conducted in collaboration with the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) 2025 accredited survey providers (Octopus Group for the employer survey, and YouGov for the employee survey) to ensure data collected adhered to industry standards for market, opinion and social research. The dual-survey approach aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of both employer and employee perspectives and practices to enable robust analysis to provide insights that support the WFH research and consultation process.

A combination of purposive and quota sampling methods was employed to ensure the surveys reached the relevant yet diverse respondent bases. Purposive sampling was employed to specifically target employers who use the Clerks Award, as well as employees covered by this Award, ensuring that the survey captures insights from individuals covered by the Clerks Award.

To further ensure representativeness, quota sampling was utilised to manage the distribution of key respondent characteristics outlined in the section below, as well as for employee gender and age, to ensure the sample reflects a balanced demographic distribution. By using this combined sampling strategy, the study aimed to gather comprehensive and representative datasets, while addressing specific research objectives related to the Clerks Award.

Draft survey questions for both the employer and employee surveys were published on the Commission's website for feedback from 3 to 10 March 2025 prior to finalisation of the survey design. A conference before Commissioner McKinnon was conducted on 21 March 2025 with the interested parties to gather further feedback about the survey design. The final form of questions incorporated feedback and consultations with the interested parties.

SURVEY 1 – EMPLOYERS

The [employer survey](#) was developed by Swinburne University in consultation with the interested parties, including [formal feedback](#) on draft versions of the survey and the conference before Commissioner McKinnon, and administered online by Octopus Group from 8 to 14 April 2025.

The survey questionnaire was sent to participants who met all the following participant selection criteria:

- Human Resources (HR) professionals and business leaders who have a direct influence over recruitment and HR policies and practices for their organisation. We excluded respondents who indicated they held non-managerial roles, such as *Administrator* or *Tradesperson*, as they were unlikely to have oversight over employment agreements.

- Those who work for employers (or are an employer) who use the Clerks Award directly (78%) or have employees to whom an enterprise agreement applies who would otherwise be covered by the Clerks Award (22%).
- Aged 18+

The 35-question employer survey captured information about employers' workplaces on a variety of themes relevant to the study including:

- Organisational information, such as its industry, size, sector, and location within Australia
- The composition of the workforce, including demographics and coverage by the Clerks Award
- The availability of work-from-home policies for full-time and part-time employees employed under the Clerks Award
- Rates of approval for requests to WFH, and factors used to determine whether requests to WFH are granted or denied
- Contextual reasons why employees covered by the Clerks Award are required to work from the office
- How work-from-home affects the design, implementation and uptake of policies related to flexible working hours
- Performance management and accountability of employees working under flexible working arrangements

A sample of n=398 responses were recorded. We removed 14 respondents with unusually short survey completion times (less than 3 minutes), based on concerns regarding the quality of their data as these response times potentially indicated they were not reading the questions properly or providing thoughtful responses (See Appendix 7.1). This cut-off time contrasts with the median completion time of 7 minutes and 53 seconds. The final sample was n=384 respondents.

Of these responses, 47% were from medium-sized businesses (20-199 employees), 27% were from large businesses (200+ employees), 21% from small businesses (5-19 employees) and the remainder from micro-businesses (1-4 employees).

In terms of where their home office or team was physically based, 32% of respondents indicated they were from Victoria, 23% from New South Wales, 20% from Queensland, 10% from Western Australia, 9% from South Australia, 3% from Tasmania, and the remainder from Australian territories.

For their business operations, 48% of respondents reported their organisation was a local organisation, 39% indicated their organisation was a national business, and the remainder indicated they were from international organisations.

SURVEY 2 – EMPLOYEES

The [employee survey](#) was developed by Swinburne University in consultation with the interested parties, including formal feedback on draft versions of the survey and the conference before Commissioner McKinnon, and administered online by YouGov from 17

to 28 April 2025.

The survey questionnaire was sent to participants who met all the following participant selection criteria:

- Aged 18 years or over
- Employees working in the private sector
- Employees with clerical role types (including general office clerks, customer service clerks, retail staff, office administrators, data entry workers and secretaries), who mainly carry out [clerical and administrative work](#) (such as managing documents, maintaining records, answering and screening telephone calls etc.)

The 26-question employee survey captured respondents' contexts and attitudes on a variety of themes relevant to the study, including:

- Respondent demographic information, including age, gender and working status etc.
- Information about their employer, including their industry
- Information about their work responsibilities
- Current WFH arrangements, including their approval status, how they were requested, and whether they are temporary or ongoing
- Reasons for which requests to WFH are approved or denied
- The perceived benefits of WFH, including its impact on work/life balance, physical health and mental health
- The impact of WFH on policies related to flexible working hours.

A total of n=799 responses were received, n=452 (56.6%) were female, whilst n=347 (43.4%) were male. The largest age groups represented were those aged 25-34 years (31.2%) and 35-44 years (30.6%). Almost 9 in 10 (87%) participants were found to be working full time.

By region, 29.9% (n=239) of employees were from New South Wales, 29.0% (n=232) were from Victoria, 18.3% (n=146) were from Queensland, 11.5% (n=92) were from Western Australia, 7.9% (n=63) were from South Australia, 1.8% (n=14) were from the Australian Capital Territory, 1.3% were from Tasmania, and 0.4% (n=3) were from the Northern Territory.

As it was anticipated that many participants in the employee survey would not know whether they were covered by the Clerks Award or not, a soft launch of the survey was sent to 88 participants to test their responses.

This involved a multi-step screening process at the beginning of the survey where participants were asked:

1. What type of work they do

Options:

- Professional or higher technical work - work that requires at least degree-level

- qualifications (e.g., doctor, accountant, lawyer, engineer) [SCREENED OUT];
- Manager or Senior Administrator (e.g., employed company director, finance manager, personnel manager, senior sales manager);
- Clerical (e.g., clerk, secretary, admin, office coordinator); Sales or Services (e.g., commercial traveller, shop assistant, nursery nurse, care assistant, paramedic);
- Foreperson or Supervisor of Other Workers (e.g., building site foreperson, supervisor of cleaning workers);
- Skilled Manual Work (e.g., plumber, electrician, cook, hairdresser) [SCREENED OUT];
- Semi-Skilled or Unskilled Manual Work (e.g., machine operator, assembler, postman, waiter, cleaner, labourer, driver [SCREENED OUT];
- Other [SCREENED OUT].

2. What the key responsibilities of their current job were

Options

- Filing and copying documents;
- Maintaining records and/or journals;
- Typing and word processing;
- Managing accounts, invoices, and orders (bookkeeping);
- Billing clients and customers;
- Maintaining records and journals, including payroll;
- Answering and screening telephone calls;
- Cash handling;
- Call or contact centre work (including supervisory roles);
- Technical support work;
- Arranging bookings and itineraries;
- Making appointments;
- Attending a reception desk;
- Providing secretarial and executive support services

3. Whether they were aware of any enterprise agreement that applies to their current employment (Options = Yes, No, Don't know)

4. How much they knew about the Clerks Award previously (Options = A lot; A fair bit; I think I've heard about it; I didn't know anything about it)

5. Whether, to the best of their knowledge, they are covered by the Clerks award

Options

- Yes, I'm covered;
- Yes, I think I'm covered;
- Not sure, but I know my employer has an enterprise agreement;
- I'm sure I'm not covered [SCREENED OUT];
- unsure/don't know)

NOTE: Data was initially collected from participants who did not know if they were covered by the Clerks Award, but their type of work was relevant, during a soft launch of n=80 participants.

These survey questions were slightly modified, based on the findings of the soft launch, to provide greater clarity about the definitions of an enterprise agreement, modern award and the Clerks Award. The modified questions were as follows:

1. **What type of work they do** (if this was relevant to the Clerks Award, go to 2)
2. **What the key responsibilities of their current job were** (if this was relevant to the Clerks Award, go to 3)
3. **To the best of your knowledge, what determines the wages and conditions in your current role?**

- **A modern award** specifies minimum standards for pay and conditions in specific industries or occupations (e.g., 'retail industry' or 'legal services'). You can have additional entitlements and still be covered by the award.
- **The Clerks award** specifically covers private-sector employees who perform clerical or administrative work.
- **An enterprise agreement** is a negotiated agreement between a business and its workforce (often through a union). A modern award does not apply to you if an enterprise agreement is in place.

Please select the option that best applies

- I know that the Clerks Award applies to me;
- I think that the Clerks Award applies to me;
- Another modern award (but not the Clerks Award) applies to me [SCREENED OUT];
- I know an enterprise agreement applies to me [SCREENED OUT];
- I think an enterprise agreement applies to me [SCREENED OUT];
- I don't know/Unsure.

3. Results & Discussion



3. Results & Discussion

The results from the employer and employee surveys are presented in the following sections.

When comparisons are made between the categories (e.g., gender differences in knowledge about the Clerks Award), we assess the significance of any observed differences using the chi-square (χ^2) test of independence. When comparisons are made based on differences of degree (e.g., gender differences in whether workers Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, or Always WFH), we used ordinal logistic regression to assess statistical significance. We describe differences as 'significant' if they are associated with a p -value of less than .05, and further discussion of the data assurance and statistical testing is provided in Appendix 7.1 and 7.2.

3.1. EMPLOYER SURVEY RESULTS

Key Employer Survey Observations

- 55% of employers offered WFH for all or most clerical roles, 25% offered it to some employees on a case-by-case basis, 20% rarely or did not offer WFH.
- Employees from 49% of employers had flexible start/finish times, 19% of employers rarely or did not offer this.
- 52% of employers say working hours do not change when employees WFH, 22% say working hours tend to decrease, while 26% said they occasionally or always increase.
- 77% of employers who had received a WFH request said that no requests or a minority of requests were denied, 11% indicated some requests were denied, while the remainder reported denying most or all requests.
- Primary reasons for employers declining WFH requests were due to concerns about productivity (35%) or employees' ability to work remotely (20%), because work tasks cannot be performed at home (24%) or because it would be difficult to change other employees' working arrangements (22%).
- Conversely, the primary reasons for approving WFH requests were due to improved productivity/efficiency (42%), because the organisation offers WFH as a standard practice (40%) or because the organisation has supportive flexible work policies (37%).
- Employer level barriers to WFH uptake are that the role cannot be performed remotely (43%), requires in-person client interaction (28%), or collaboration is more difficult remotely (36%).
- Other barriers to WFH uptake include managerial preferences, legacy management styles that rely on visibility to override productivity concerns, company policies, and the absence of a right to WFH.

The organisations in the sample were found to be from a wide range of different industries. The most frequently represented industries were *Professional, scientific and technical services* (14%), *Construction* (14%), *Health care and social assistance* (10%), and *Education and training* (9%).

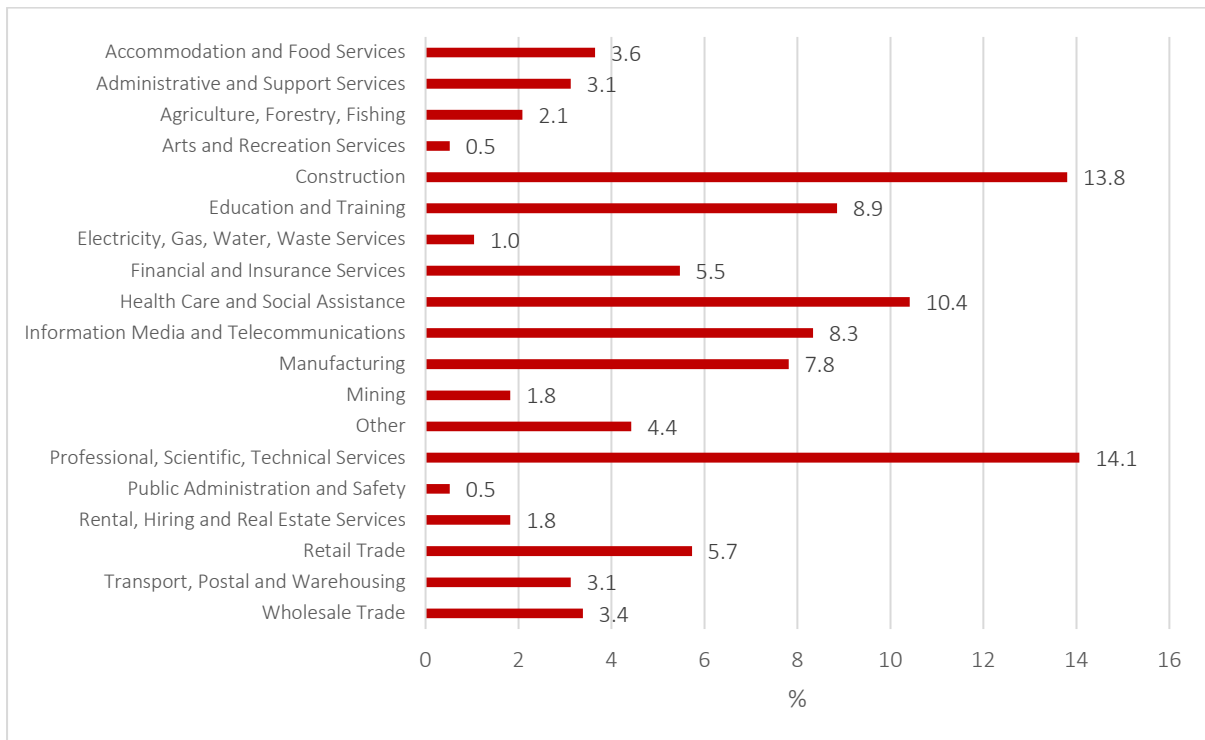


Figure 1: Industry representation of employer survey

Approximately half of employers indicated that their organisation was hybrid, in which they had a physical office that employees attended, but employees sometimes worked from home. 45% of employers indicated their organisation was office-based, where employees were typically expected to attend the physical premises. However, an office-based arrangement did not preclude working from home; employers from such organisations reported that 42.2% of employees had access to work from home (versus 66.9% of employees from hybrid organisations).

Only 4% of employers indicated that their organisation was virtual, where employees are expected to work remotely all of the time.

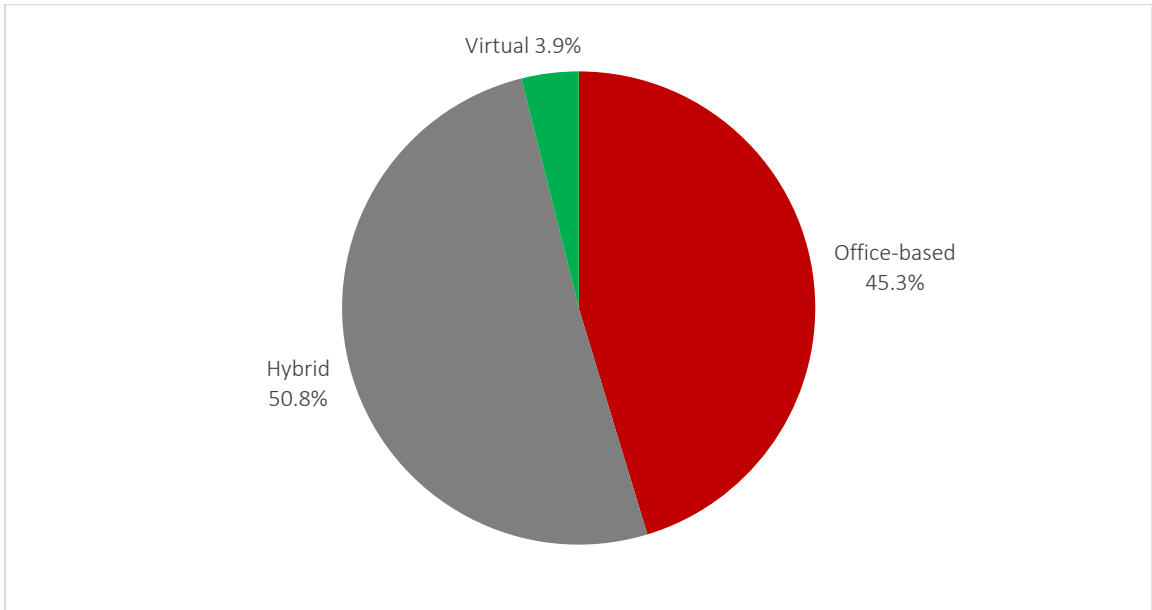


Figure 2: Types of working arrangements

Most organisations in the sample were either medium-sized businesses (20-199 employees; 46.9%) or large businesses (200+ employees; 26.8%). The remaining quarter of respondents indicated their organisation classified as either a micro-business (1-4 employees; 4.9%) or a small business (5-19 employees; 21.4%).

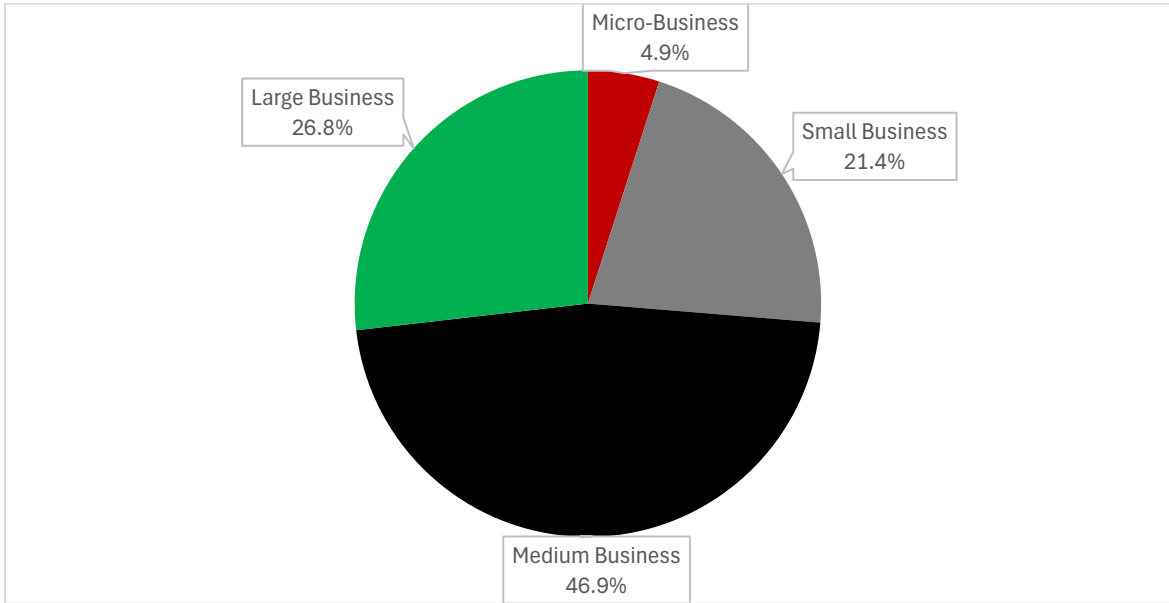


Figure 3: Organisation size

Most respondents indicated that their organisation was based locally (48%), serving only the local community or state in which the business was located. Some respondents (39%) indicated that their organisation was a national business, conducting its business activities

across Australia. A small number of respondents indicated that their business was international (13%), operating in multiple countries across the world.

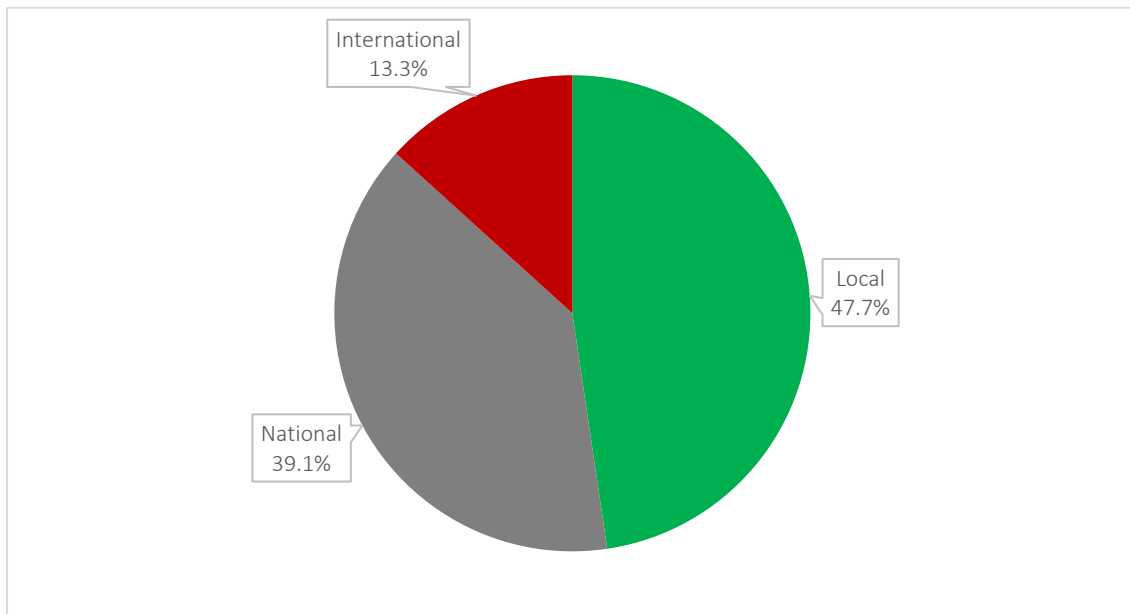


Figure 4: Location of business operations

3.1.1. COMPOSITION OF THE WORKFORCE

Employers indicated that, on average, 52.7% of the workforce was made up of males and 45.2% was made up of females. Fewer than 1% were reported as being made up of non-binary employees.

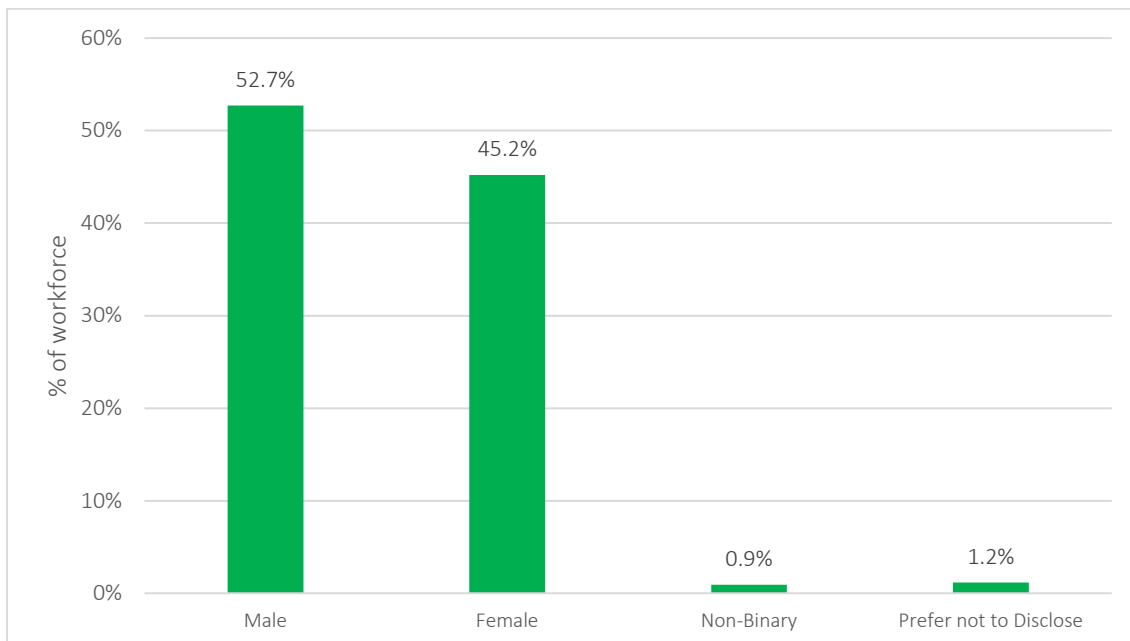


Figure 5: Reported gender composition of the workforce

Employers reported that a majority of their employees were not covered by the Clerks Award. Most employers (72.9%) indicated that fewer than half of their employees were covered by the Clerks Award.

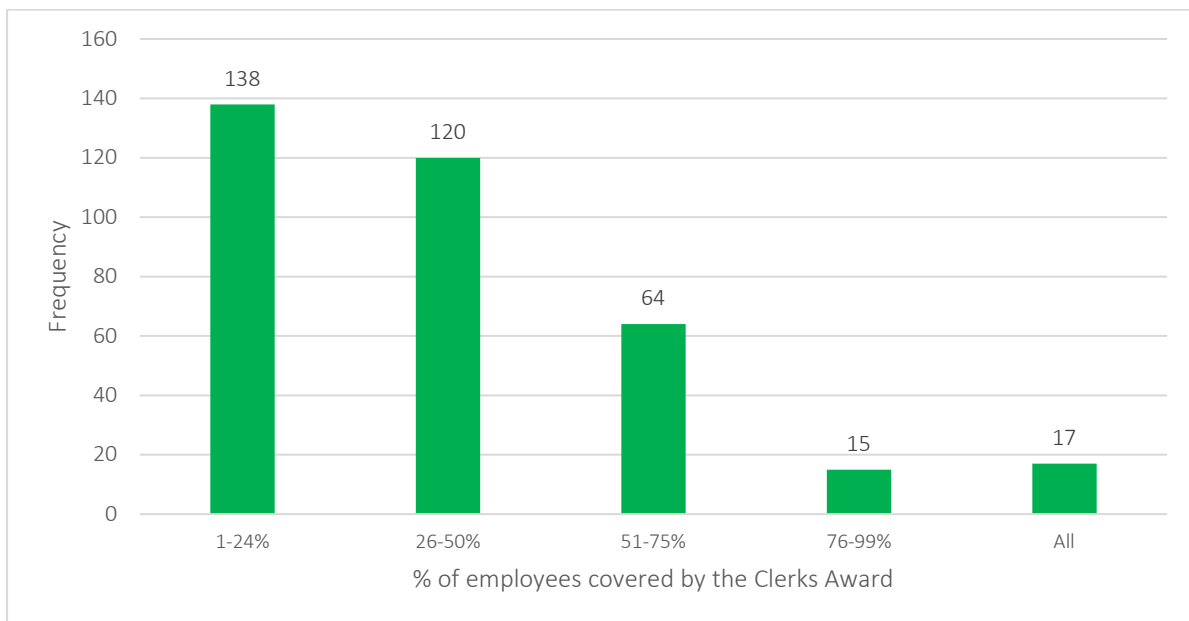


Figure 6: Percentage of employees covered by the Clerks' Award

3.1.2. AVAILABILITY OF WORK-FROM-HOME ARRANGEMENTS

Employers were asked about the percentage of clerical workers with access to WFH arrangements. The most typical response (n=99; 25.7%) was that all clerical workers had access to WFH arrangements. Many employers reported that only some of their administrative workers had access to WFH. Only a minority of employers (n=40; 10.4%) indicated that no clerical workers had access to WFH.

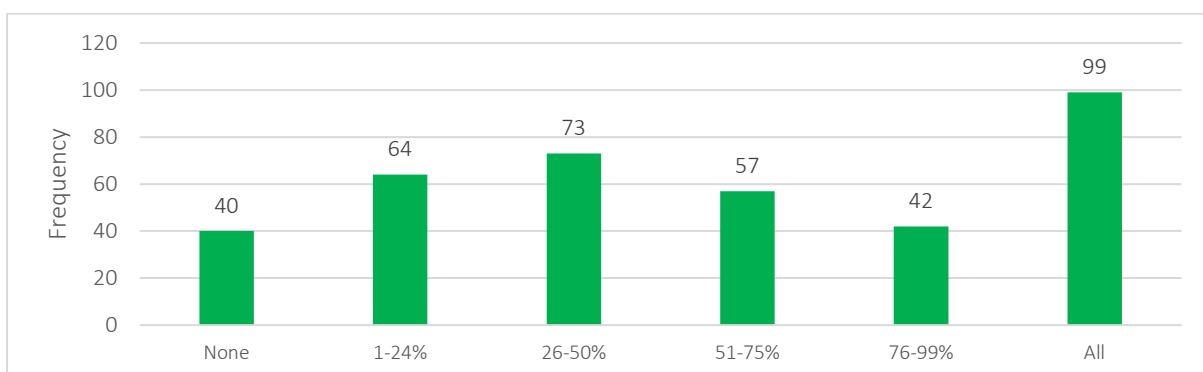


Figure 7: Percentage of clerical workers with access to WFH arrangements

Employers were also asked whether WFH arrangements were available for part-time and casual employees. A total of 68.0% of all employers indicated that WFH was available for part-time employees, and 56.9% indicated it was available for casual employees.

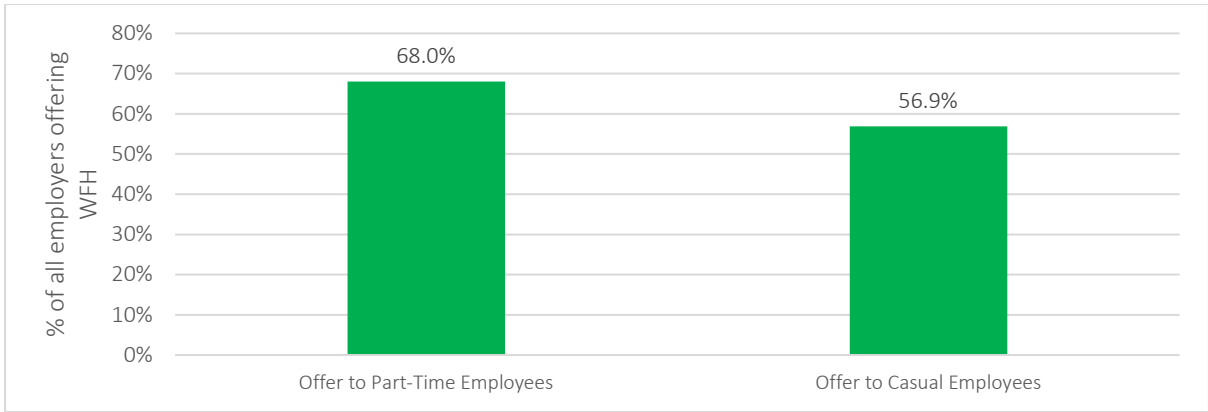


Figure 8: Percentage of all employers who offer access to WFH arrangements to part-time and casual workers

3.1.3. RATES OF APPROVAL

To gauge rates of approval, employers were asked to estimate the percentage of formal requests for WFH that were denied to clerical workers. More than half of employers (n=196; 51.0%) indicated that no WFH requests were denied, or that between 1–24% of requests were denied (n=100; 26.0%). A quarter of employers indicated that they denied at least 25% or more of requests.

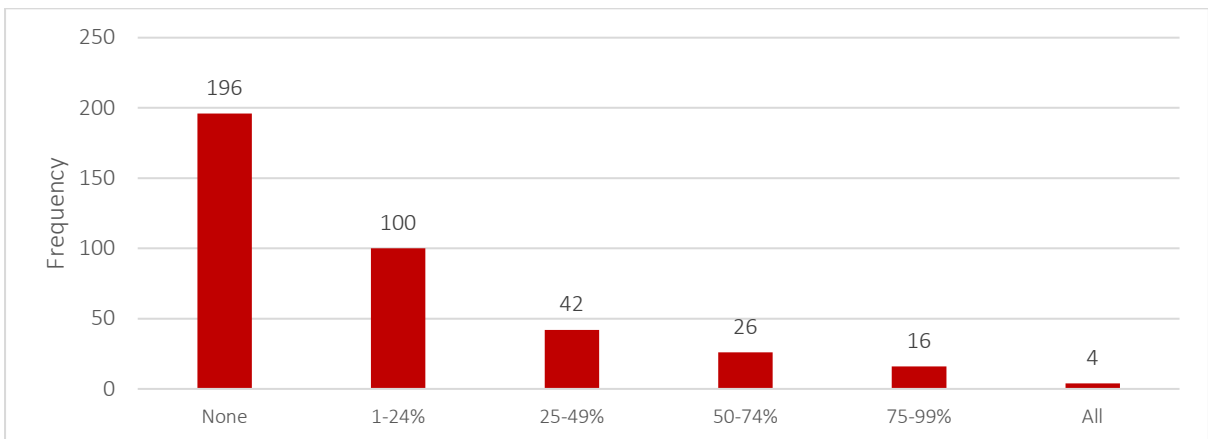


Figure 9: Percentage of WFH requests that are declined (n=384)

3.1.4. REASONS FOR APPROVAL / NON-APPROVAL

Requests for WFH arrangements were most frequently declined because of concerns about productivity or efficiency (35.4%), or concerns related to an employees' ability to work remotely (20.1%).

Some employers indicated that work tasks (e.g., interacting with customers) cannot be performed at home (24.5%), that it would be impossible to change other employees' working arrangements to accommodate the request (21.9%), or that it would be too costly to accommodate a WFH request (16.4%).

Employers also indicated that their organisation prefers employees to work from the office (24.0%), whilst some expressed a belief that work engagement would be higher when working in the office (22.9%).

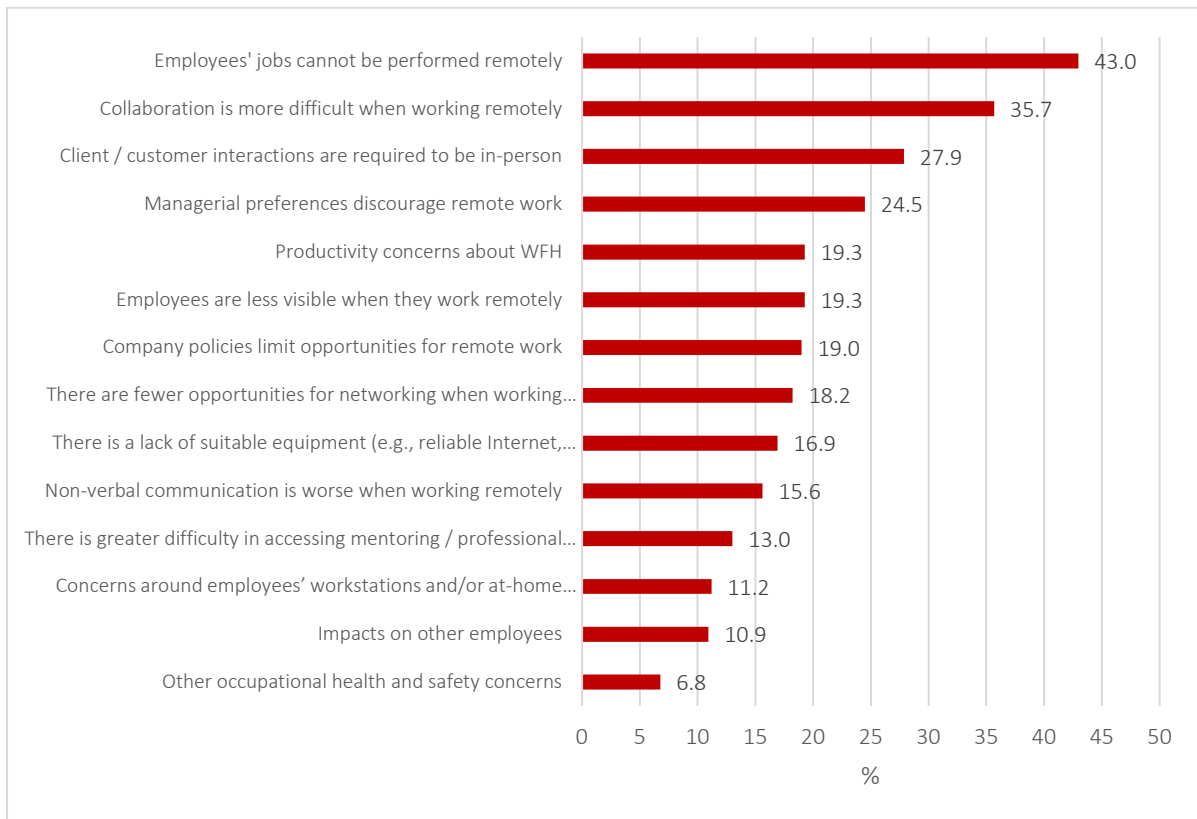


Figure 10: Reasons for denied WFH requests

Employers also described a range of factors that were associated with approval of WFH requests. Employers generally indicated requests were approved if they were assured that productivity/efficiency would be maintained or increased (42.2%).

Some employers indicated that a reason was not required for approval (40.4%), and that employees can access WFH as a standard employee benefit. Some employers (36.7%) indicated that their organisation has policies that support WFH and other forms of flexible work.

Several employers also reported that requests are approved based on employees' personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities (27.6% for children, 21.9% for an elderly person), pregnancy (23.2%), personal illness (20.6%), disability (19.0%), or family and domestic violence (15.4%).

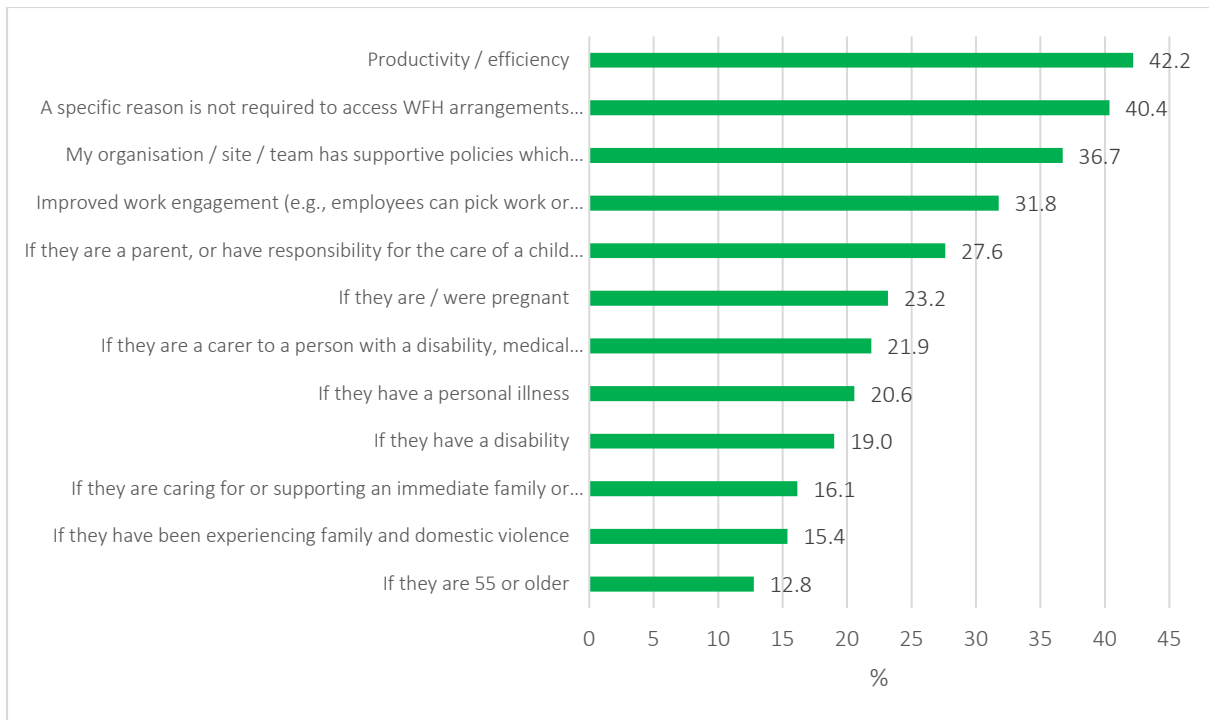


Figure 11: Reasons for approved WFH requests

3.1.5. CONTEXTUAL REASONS WHY EMPLOYEES ARE REQUIRED TO WORK FROM THE OFFICE

Employers were asked to indicate the reasons why clerical workers are required (or preferred) to work on site. The most typical reasons related to the inability of some jobs to be performed at home (43.0%), such as the requirement to conduct customer/client interactions face-to-face (27.9%). Some employers also indicated that collaboration is more difficult when working at home (35.6%).

Some employers indicated a managerial preference against remote work (24.5%), with productivity concerns about WFH (19.3%), and lack of visibility for remote workers (19.3%). Some employers expressed concerns about negative impacts on other employees (10.9%) and occupational health and safety concerns (6.8%).

Concerns over worker health and safety (WHS) appear to have declined since an [earlier 2021 Clerks WFH study](#), when 31.7% of respondents said WHS was an impediment to WFH and a key reason for requiring employees to work at the workplace (Fair Work Commission, 2021), compared with only 6.8% in this current study where it was the least frequent reason given by employers for why an employee may be required to work from the office.

However, differences between the 2021 Clerks study and this study limit their comparability (see Appendix 7.3). The studies sampled Australian employers from different populations and used different screening questions to target a different subset of respondents. Also, the 2021 Clerks study had a smaller sample size, and this sample had a different distribution of employer sizes.

Employers also pointed to some disadvantages for employees when working remotely, including fewer opportunities for networking (18.2%) and greater difficulty in accessing professional development opportunities (13.0%).

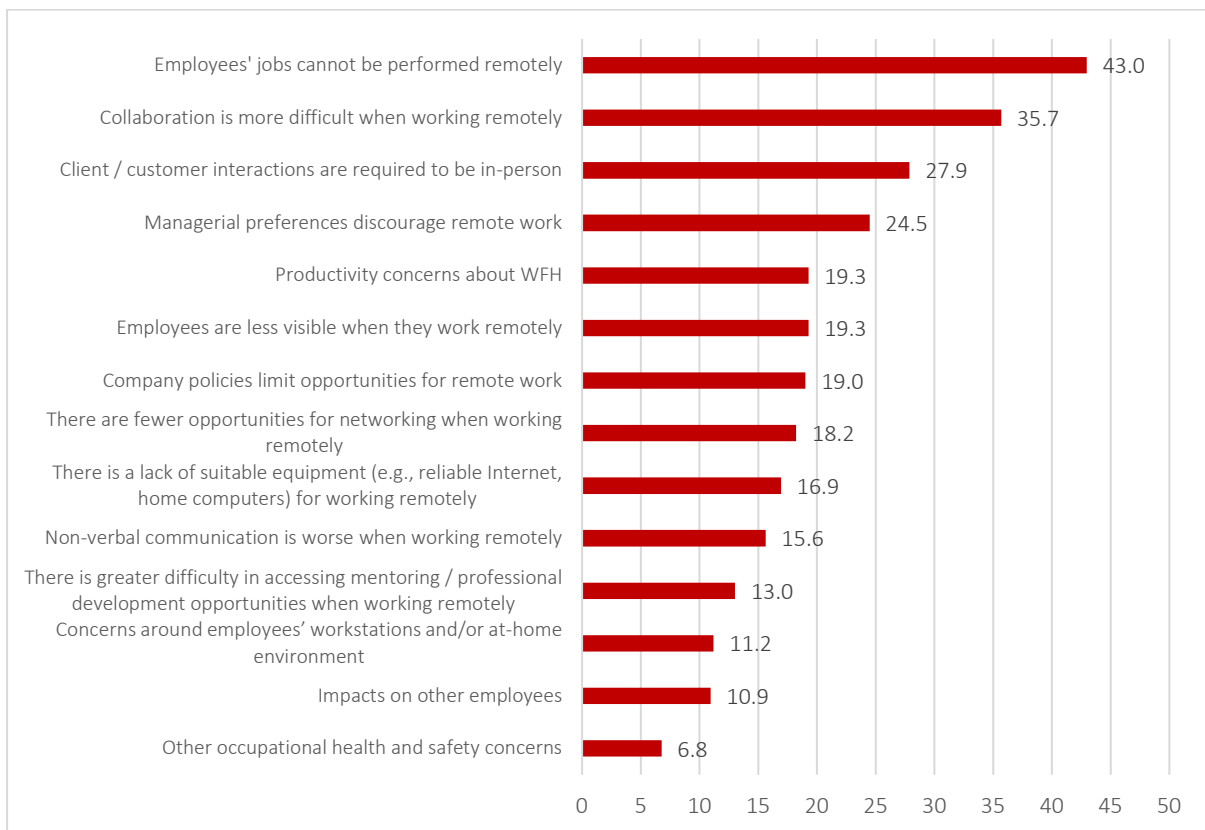


Figure 12: Employer stated reasons employees are required to work at the office

3.1.6. HOW WFH AFFECTS THE DESIGN, IMPLEMENTATION AND UPTAKE OF POLICIES RELATED TO FLEXIBLE WORK HOURS

Employers were asked to describe the impact of WFH policies on the design and implementation of other flexible working arrangements.

More than half of the employers (55.3%) indicated that WFH was available for all or most roles, with a smaller number (24.9%) indicating it was available for some roles or on a case-by-case basis. In contrast, 19.8% of employers indicated WFH was rarely or never available.

Flexible start/finish times was the next most commonly available flexible work arrangement, with 49.8% of employers indicating that it was available to most or all employees.

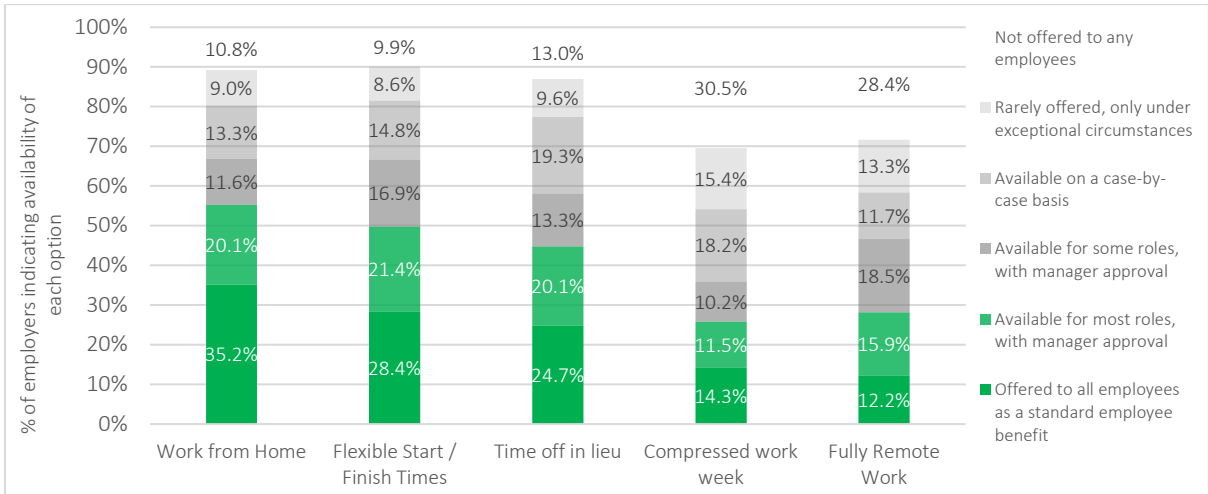


Figure 13: Availability of other flexible work practices

Employers were also asked whether WFH had any impacts on their employees' usual working hours.

A minority of employers (38.6%) indicated that employees always or often had freedom to set their specific work hours, although more (47.3%) indicated that employees can always or often modify their working hours to a degree.

Employers indicated that the overall number of working hours sometimes changed (40.6%) when employees worked from home. About a third of employers (31.3%) indicated that the number of working hours rarely or never changed, and the remainder (28.0%) indicated that they often or always changed.

This result is similar to findings in the [2021 Clerks WFH study](#) (Fair Work Commission, 2021), which found that approximately one third of employees did not change their working hours, whereas the remaining two thirds changed to at least some degree.

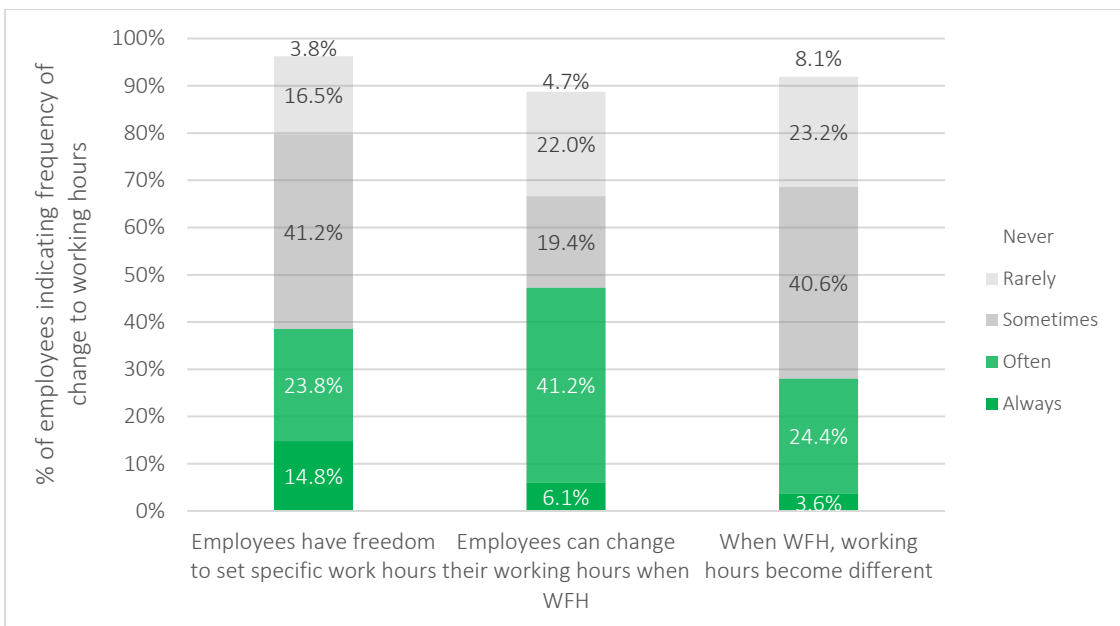


Figure 14: Variations to working hours when WFH

Employers were asked when their employees worked outside of the ordinary hours of the Clerks Award when WFH. A small number of employers indicated that employees 'often' or 'always' worked at these times, ranging from 12.8% (Sunday) and 13.4% (after 12:30pm Saturday), to 18.9% (after 7pm, Monday to Friday) and 20.6% (before 7am, Monday to Friday). Thus, the majority of WFH employees are likely to work ordinary hours.

This result is similar to findings in the [2021 Commission WFH survey](#) (Fair Work Commission, 2021), which found that 8-16% of organisations had employees that regularly worked outside of ordinary hours.

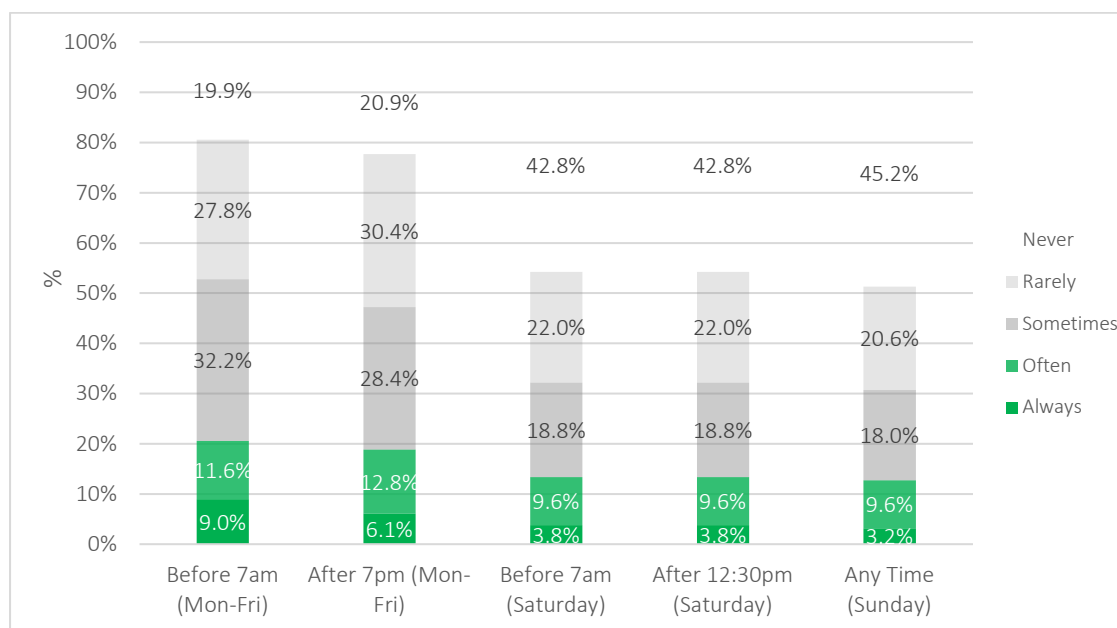


Figure 15: Times worked when employees WFH

Employers were also asked whether working hours increased or decreased when their employees WFH. The results were split. About half of employers (52%) indicated that working hours remain about the same. Conversely, about 22% of employers indicated that working hours tended to decrease when employees WFH, whereas about 26% indicated that it occasionally or always increased.

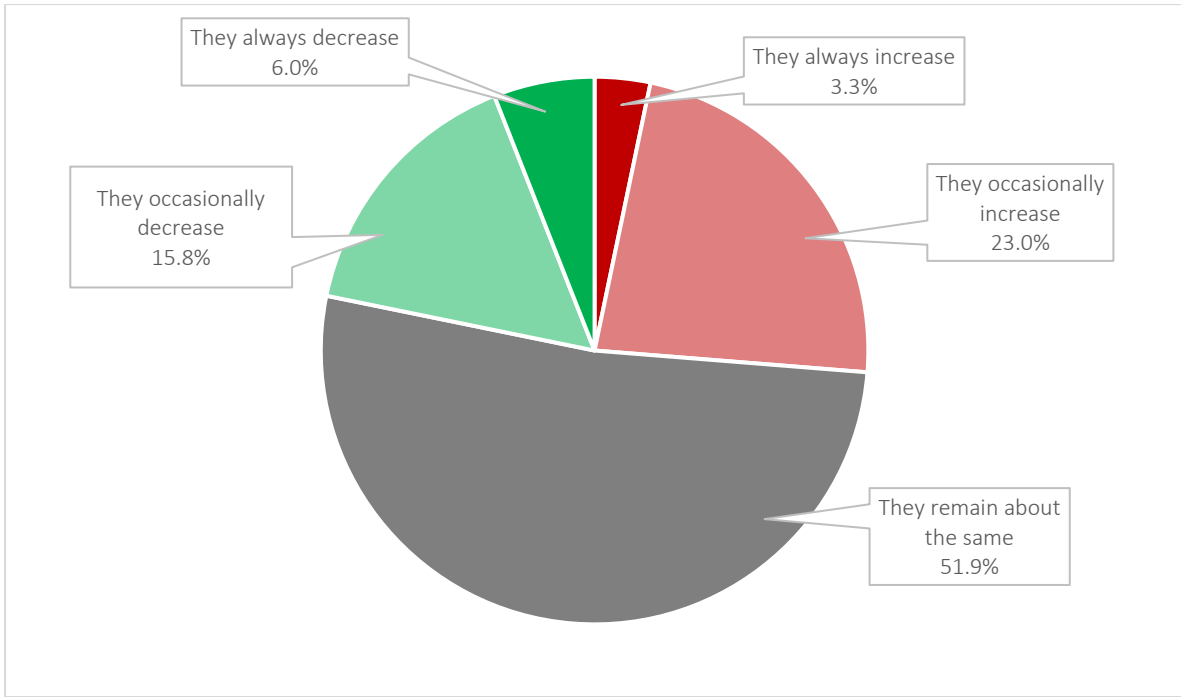


Figure 16: What happens to working hours when employees WFH?

3.1.7. MANAGEMENT OF WORK TIME WHEN WFH

Employers were also asked how they managed employees' work time when WFH.

With respect to attending personal or non-work-related matters, employers' policies appear to be very similar regardless of whether employees are WFH or working from the workplace. Almost 2 in 5 (38.1%) of employers reported employees were 'often' or 'always' allowed to attend to personal matters when at the workplace, whilst a similar number (43.9%) reported they 'often' or 'always' could do so when WFH too.

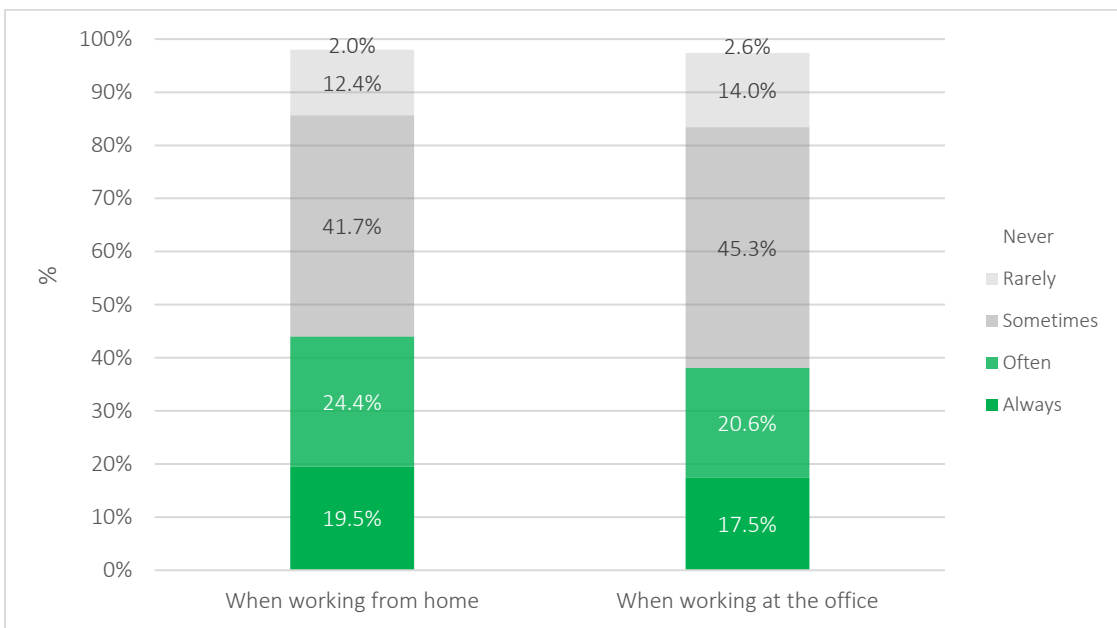


Figure 17: Are employees permitted to attend to non-work-related matters?

We also asked employers whether employees were required to record exact start and finish times when WFH. In total, 35.8% of employers indicated that employees always or often had to record start and finish times. In contrast, about 38% indicated that employees never or rarely had to indicate start/finish times.

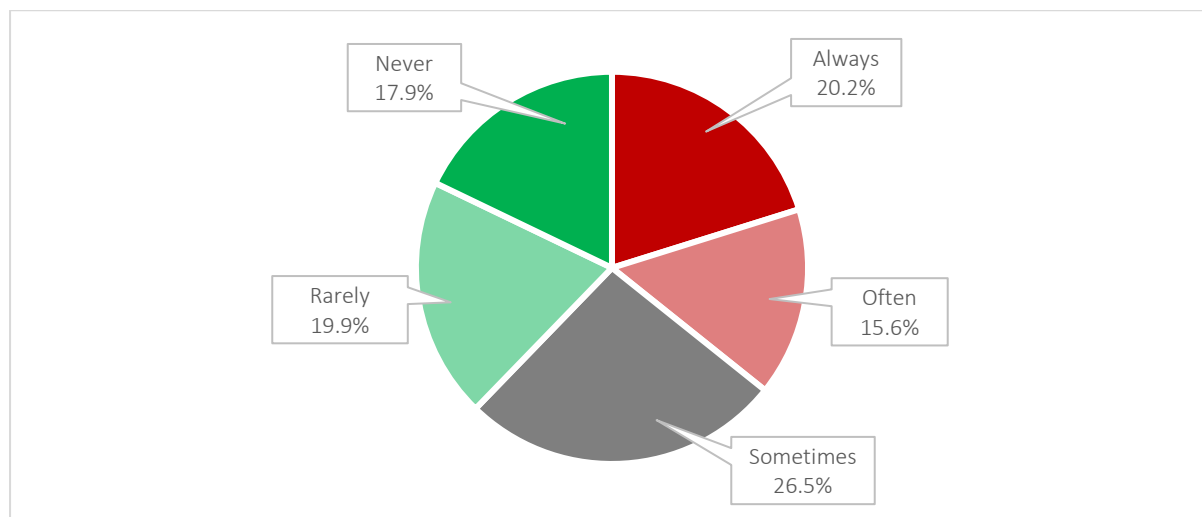


Figure 18: Requirement to record start / finish times

We also asked employers to provide free-text comments about any other mechanisms they had in place for managing work time and timekeeping. Common mechanisms included:

- Use of emails and shared calendars to track employee activity (8 comments)
- Policies requiring employees to record absence requests (5 comments)
- Computerised tracking systems (4 comments)
- Clock in / clock out systems (4 comments)
- Observing employee engaging with instant messaging systems (e.g., Microsoft Teams, Google Meet), such as their responses to messages, participation in group chats and meetings (3 comments)
- Use of project management software (2 comments)

3.1.8. EMPLOYER FEEDBACK COMMENTS REGARDING EMPLOYEE ACCESS TO WFH

The employer survey also captured qualitative feedback from employers asking about potential changes to working practices that could make it easier for employees to access WFH.

The comments were inspected, grouped into themes, and counted. While none of the employers referenced the Clerks Award directly, they discussed potential changes to work policies and systems. Key themes identified included:

- **Equipment:** Respondents outlined the need to supply employees with good quality equipment to support WFH (n=5 comments)

- **WFH Policies:** Respondents indicated that clearer WFH policies and approval processes are required for remote work to be successful (n=5 comments)
- **Role Limitations:** Some respondents called for WFH to be expanded to a greater number of roles, and potentially modifying work responsibilities to suit WFH (n=2 comments)
- **Stronger protections for WFH:** Some employees indicated that there needed to be stronger protections for WFH arrangements within employee contracts, as some employers refuse WFH requests based on questionable operational needs (n=2 comments)

We also asked employers to provide general feedback regarding their experiences with WFH. The respondents described several challenges:

- **Engagement & Productivity:** Small companies struggle to ensure employees are working and/or upholding cybersecurity practices (n=5 comments)
- **Communication & Coordination:** Poor communication is a common issue, leading to inefficiencies and difficulty in distinguishing work from personal life (n=3 comments)
- **Job Role Limitations:** Client-facing roles, particularly in administration, often require physical presence (n=4 comments)
- **Workplace Culture:** Some employers feel WFH negatively impacts team cohesion and corporate culture, and some indicate their own managers strongly discourage WFH (n=4 comments)
- **Employee Misuse:** There are some concerns about employees taking advantage of WFH, leading to decreased accountability (n=2 comments)

Employers also described several potential benefits of remote work arrangements:

- **Productivity:** Many employers report that productivity and work quality are maintained or improved when employees work remotely (n=9 comments)
- **Employee Satisfaction & Retention:** WFH enhances work-life balance (WLB), flexibility, and job satisfaction (n=9 comments)
- **Flexibility & Autonomy:** Employees value being able to choose their work location based on personal circumstances (n=3 comments)
- **Trust & Workplace Structure:** Some organisations have built full WFH models based on mutual trust rather than surveillance (n=4 comments)

Finally, employers also outlined several organisational policies and procedures that are necessary for WFH arrangements to be successful.

- **Remote Work Models:** Companies should provide structured guidelines and approval processes, and ensure that role expectations are clear (n=5 comments)
- **Security & Support:** Organisations should invest in IT security measures, technical support, and online resources (n=2 comments)
- **WFH-Specific Policies:** One employer indicated that salaries and benefits need to be adjusted based on WFH arrangements (n=1 comment)
- **Maintaining connection with employees:** Some employers describe different activities for engaging employees, including online check-ins, wellness sessions, and team-building activities are used to maintain connection (n=6 comments)
- **Adaptation Over Time:** Several companies have evolved their WFH policies based on employee feedback and experiences post-COVID. WFH policies should be periodically reviewed and updated (n=3 comments)

3.2. EMPLOYEE SURVEY RESULTS

In the following section we will discuss the findings from the Employee survey. Similar to the Employer survey, a range of screening questions were employed to ensure the eligibility of the sample of participants. These questions were discussed and finalised at a conference before Commissioner McKinnon, conducted on 21 March 2025, and incorporate feedback on the draft surveys received from the interested parties.

First, employees were asked what sector they worked in, and anyone who did not work in the private sector was screened out. Next, participants were asked what best described the type of work they currently do and were given a list of nine options to choose from. From this point, only those who chose 'Manager or senior administrator,' 'Clerical,' 'Sales or services,' or 'Foreperson/supervisor of other workers' were able to progress.

Next, participants were asked to identify the key responsibilities of their current job from a [list of responsibilities](#) employees covered by the Clerks Award might perform. This list was derived from the Clerks Award. Respondents were screened out if they did not select any of these responsibilities. If they progressed, participants were then asked if they were aware of any enterprise agreement that applied to their current employment and were screened out if they replied 'yes.'

Finally, participants were asked, to the best of their knowledge, if they knew if they were covered by the Clerks Award. Only participants who selected 'Yes, I'm sure I'm covered,' 'Yes, I think I'm covered,' and 'Unsure/Don't Know' progressed to the main survey.

Data was initially collected from n=850 employees but, after a range of quality assurance measures were applied to ensure the overall quality of the data that was collected (see Appendix 7.1), a final sample of n=799 was approved for analysis.

Key Employee Survey Observations

- Two-thirds (66.4%) of all employees surveyed indicated being able to WFH to some extent, with over half (52.3%) currently doing so.
- 45.5% of employees were found to have requested WFH arrangements. 64.1% of these WFH requests were approved, 29.5% were partially approved whilst 6.1% of WFH requests were declined. 11.1% of employees were able to WFH without requesting permission, 12.6% had not made a request but had been WFH since Covid-19, 17.8% do not currently WFH but would like to, whilst 13.0% of employees said they did not want to WFH.
- 85.7% of employees who have the ability to WFH said it had a positive impact on their work-life balance, 75.7% said it had a positive impact on their mental health, and 66.9% said it had a positive impact on their physical health.
- Two-thirds (66.4%) of the employees surveyed were found to have at least heard about the Clerks Award, but only 15.5% said they knew 'a lot' about it. The remaining employees in the survey (33.5%) indicated they 'did not know anything' about the Clerks Award.
- Employees aged 25-34 are most likely to have a WFH request approved (35.1%), whilst employees over 45 are more likely to be able to WFH without formal approval compared with younger colleagues.
- Female Managers/Senior administrators are the employees most likely to have had a WFH request declined (7.1%), whilst female employees (4.4%) are 7.3 times more likely overall to have had a WFH request declined than male employees (0.6%). However, female employees (13.1%) are more likely to be able to WFH without seeking formal approval than male employees (8.6%).
- 39.5% of employees said they worked longer hours when WFH, compared with only 13% of participants who said they worked fewer hours when WFH.
- Male employees are more likely to work outside the Clerks Award ordinary hours than female employees, particularly after 7pm on weekdays (30.9% versus 19.9%) and before 7am on Saturdays (18.0% versus 10.7%).
- Employees in the 'Professional, scientific and technical services' sector (45.9%) are more than twice as likely to know they are covered by the Clerks Award than employees working in 'Retail trade' (21.8%).
- Weekly income was not found to impact access to WFH arrangements, with the lowest earners (42%) being just as likely to have WFH arrangements as the highest earners (39.3%).
- Female employees (51.5%) were more likely than male employees (39.4%) to identify 'household management' as a WFH benefit.

3.2.1 EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS

In this section we discuss the demographics of the participants taking part in the employee survey, including details regarding age, gender, role type, industry sector, weekly income, and highest level of education.

For gender, n=453 (56.6%) of the participating employees reported they were female, whilst n=346 (43.4%) reported being male.

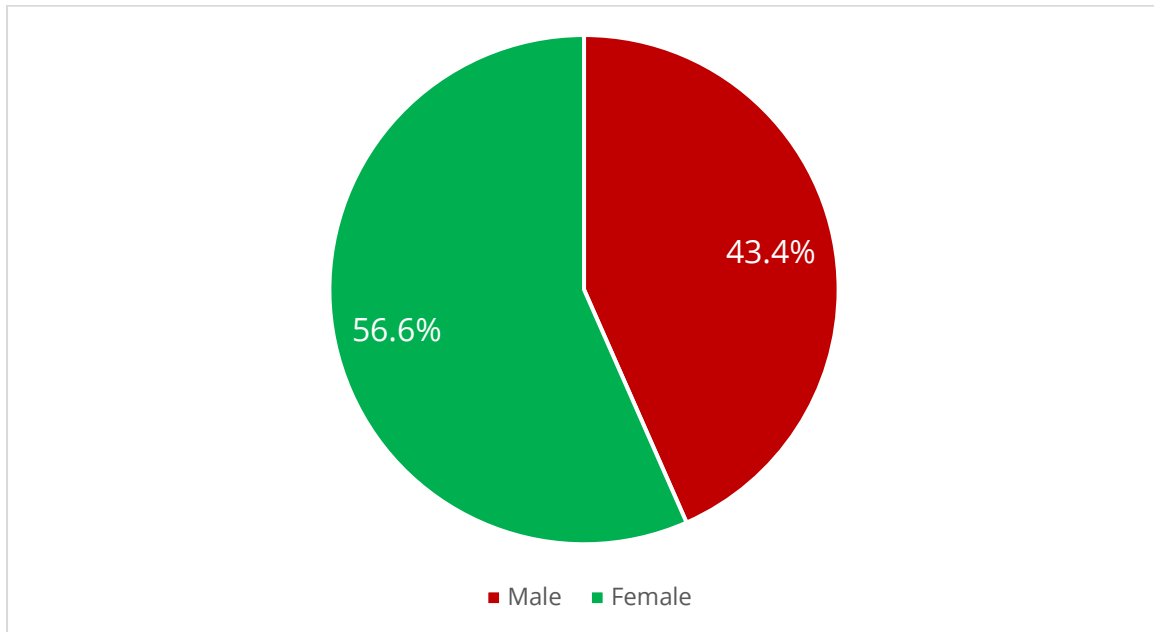


Figure 19: Gender of employee survey participants (n=799)

More than 3 in 5 survey respondents (n=494; 61.8%) were found to be aged between 25-44 years, whilst almost 1 in 5 (n=153; 19.2%) were aged between 44-54 years. A small percentage of respondents were aged under 25 years (n=54; 6.7%) or between 55-64 years (n=98; 12.3%). The number of respondents aged over 65 was negligible (n=6; 0.8%).

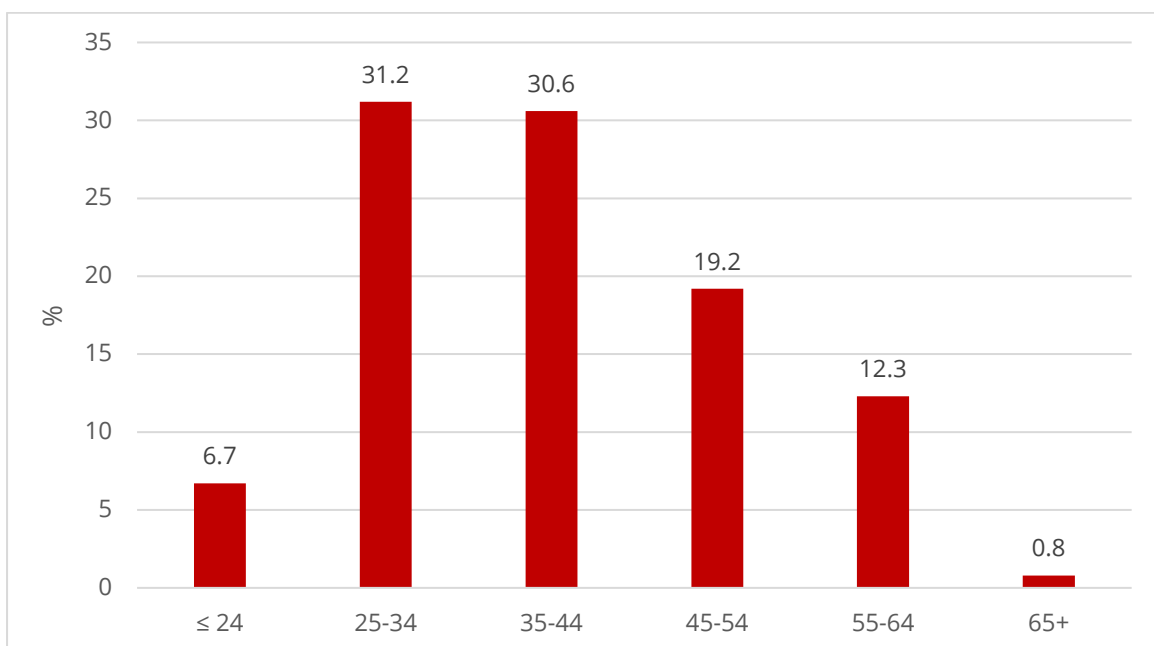


Figure 20: Age of participants (n=799)

When comparing the age distribution of this new data, with 2023 Employee Earnings and Hours (EEH) microdata from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) on 'characteristics of employees on the Clerks Award and other employees' (Fair Work Commission, 2025), the two different samples are broadly comparable with a slight skew towards the 25-34 age group for the newer data.

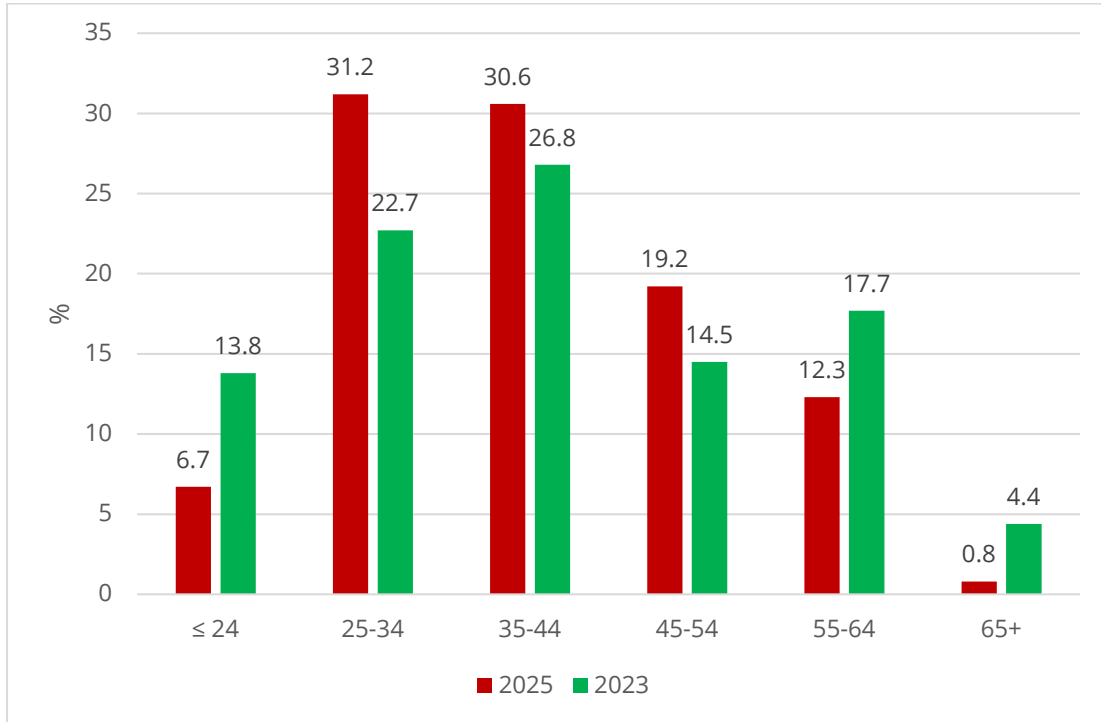


Figure 21: Age of participants compared with ABS, Microdata: Employee Earnings and Hours, Australia, May 2023.

Almost 9 in 10 employees (n=695; 87%) were found to work full-time, defined as 35 or more hours per week, compared with 13% (n=104) who worked part-time.

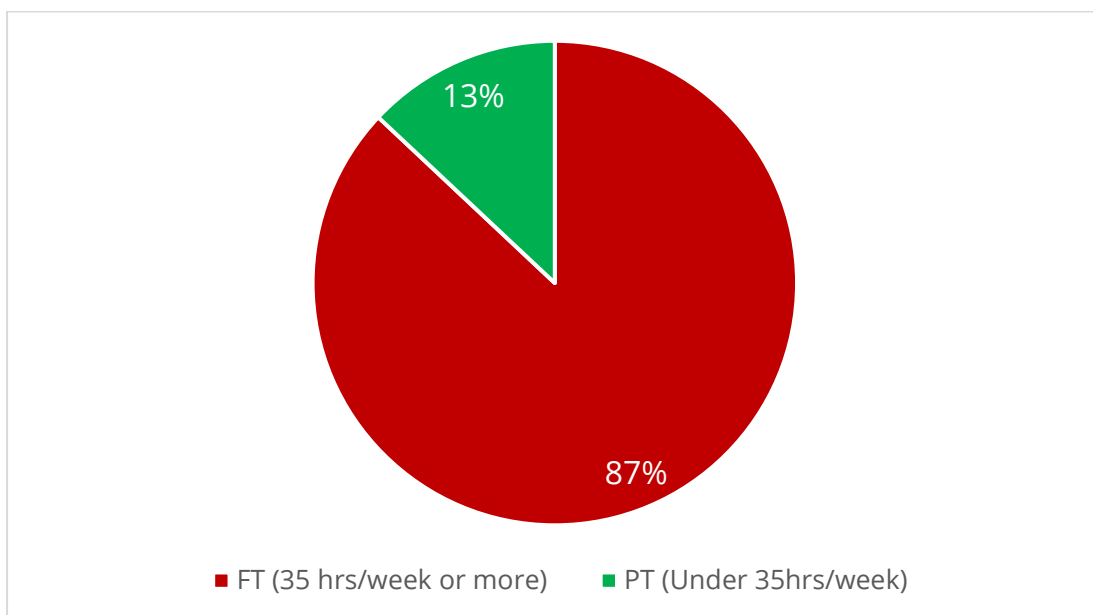


Figure 22: Working status of participants (n=799)

The industry sectors that survey respondents predominantly worked in were 'Retail Trade' (n=90; 11.3%), 'Construction' (n=75; 9.4%) and 'Administrative and support services' (n=71; 8.9%). This was followed by clerical employees from the 'Information, media and telecommunications' (n=65; 8.1%), 'Financial and insurance' (n=63; 7.9%), and 'Professional, scientific and technical services' (n=63; 7.9%) sectors.



Figure 23: Industry representation of employee survey (n=799)

Comparing the employee survey with the employer survey, whilst industry representation was found to be very similar for some sectors, differences were observed for others.

The biggest difference in industry representation was identified in the 'Education and training' sector, with 9% of the participants in the employer survey from that sector, compared with only 2.4% of participants in the employee survey. Other notable differences in representation between the employer and employee surveys were identified in 'Professional, scientific and technical services' (14% versus 7.9%), 'Administrative and support services' (3% versus 8.9%), 'Retail trade' (6% versus 11.3%), and 'Construction' (14% versus 9.4%).

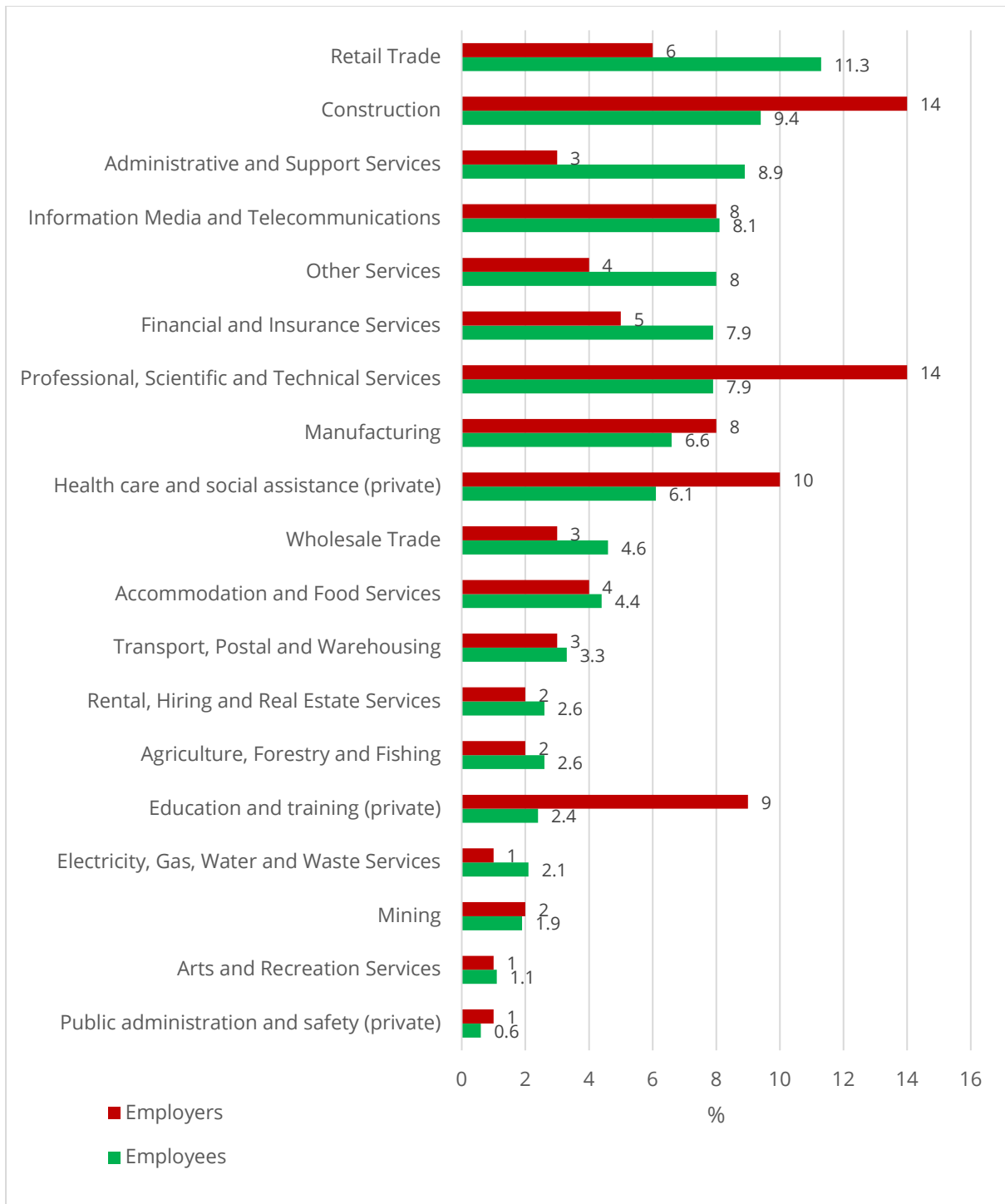


Figure 24: Comparison of industry representation between employer and employee surveys

Looking next at role type, close to half of the sample of respondents (n=358; 44.8%) described themselves as being in 'Clerical' roles, such as a clerk, administrator or office coordinator. Over a third (n=301; 37.7%) said their role type was that of a manager or senior administrator (e.g., employed company director, finance manager, personnel manager, senior sales manager).

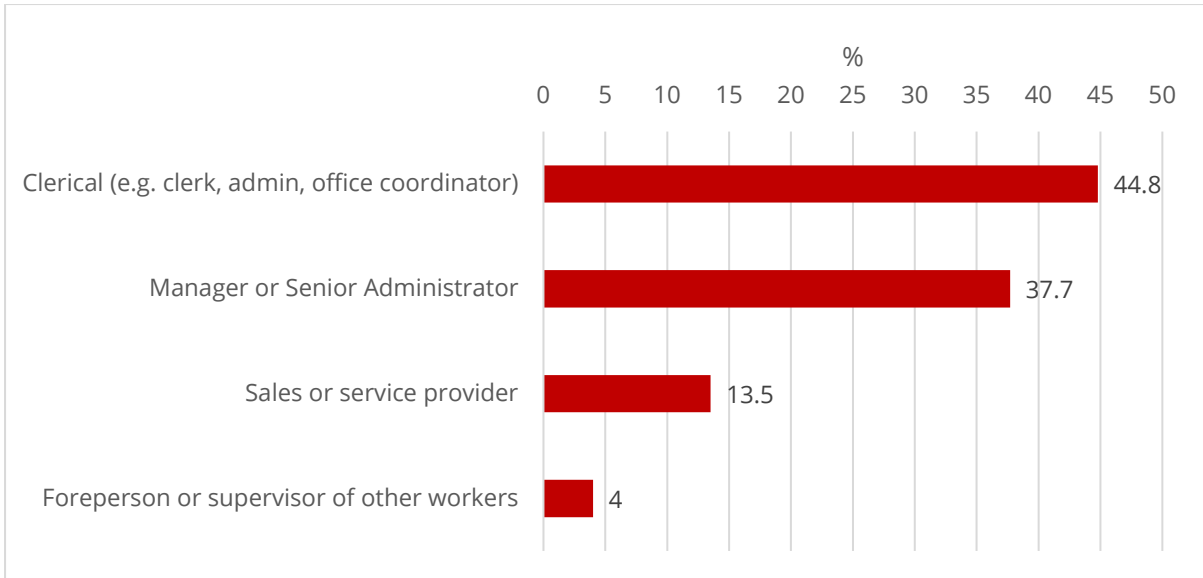


Figure 25: Survey participants by role type (n=799)

When comparing results by gender, we found a higher percentage of male survey participants were 'Managers or senior administrators' (46.6% versus 31%), 'Sales or service providers' (16.4% versus 11.3%), and 'Forepersons or supervisors of other workers' (6.1% versus 2.4%) compared to females in those roles, whilst a higher percentage of the female participants worked in 'Clerical' roles (55.3% versus 31.1%) compared to males.

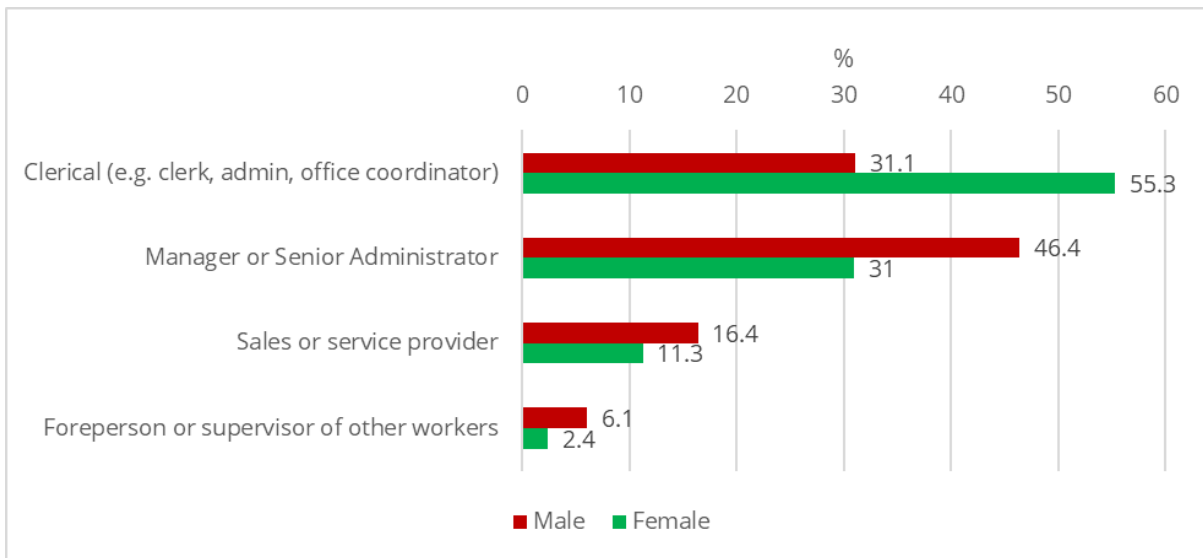


Figure 26: Role type by gender (n=799)

Looking next at personal weekly income, 22.2% of employees were found to earn under \$1000 per week, whilst half (50.5%) earned between \$1000 and \$1999 per week, and 27.6% earned \$2000 or more per week.

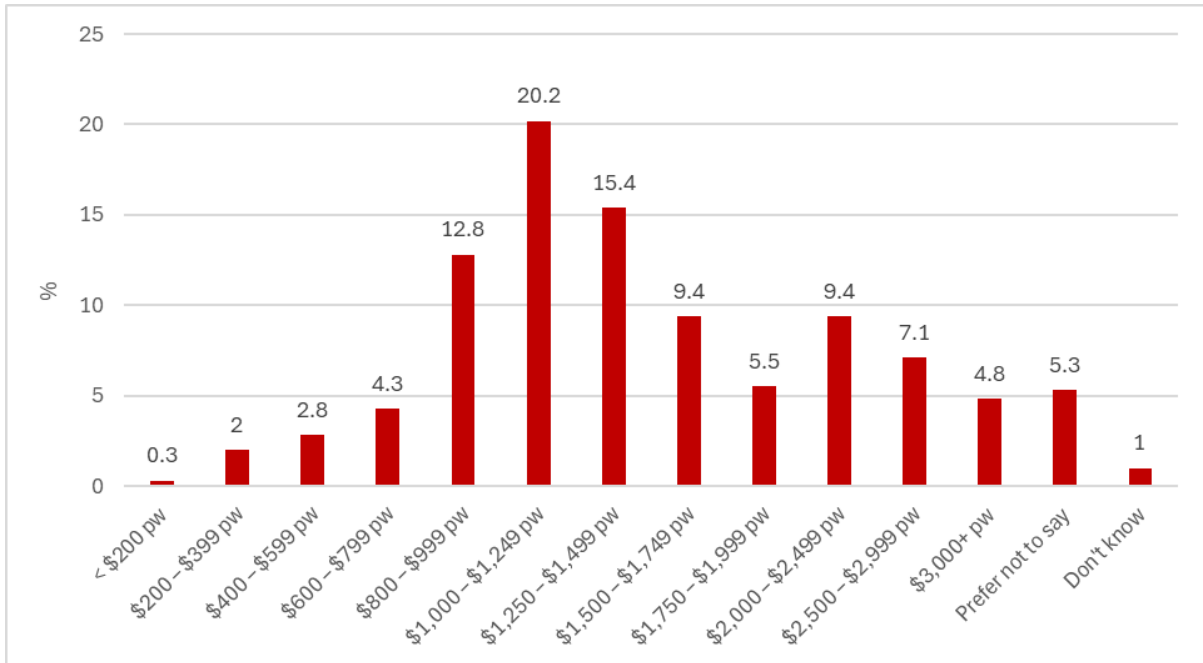


Figure 27: Personal net weekly income of participants (n=799)

Comparing weekly income by gender, we found that male employees (30.8%) were more than twice as likely (2.2 times) to earn \$2000 or more each week than female employees (13.9%), aligning with existing [gender pay gap studies](#) in Australia (WGEA, 2025).

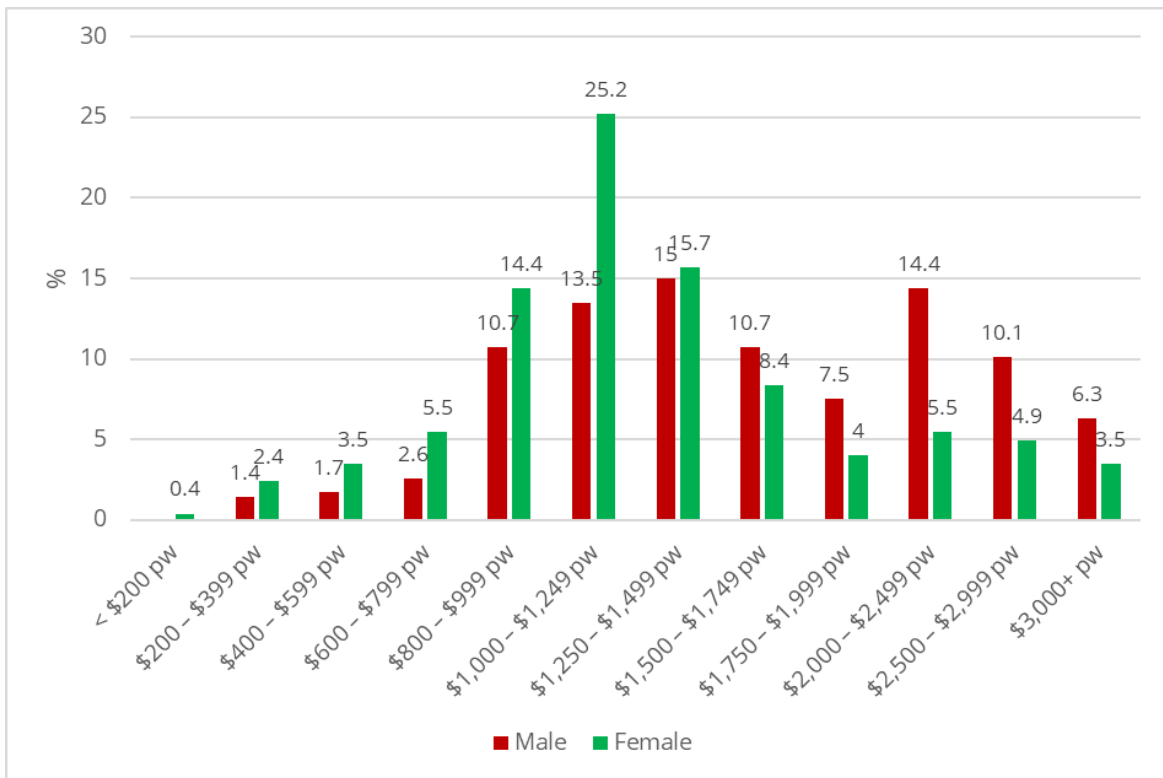


Figure 28: Personal net weekly income by gender (n=799)

The most common education level amongst the clerical employees surveyed was found to be a bachelor's degree (n=283; 35.4%). Almost a quarter of participants had a higher qualification than this (23.4%), whilst a similar amount said their highest education level was a TAFE qualification (n=206; 25.8%).

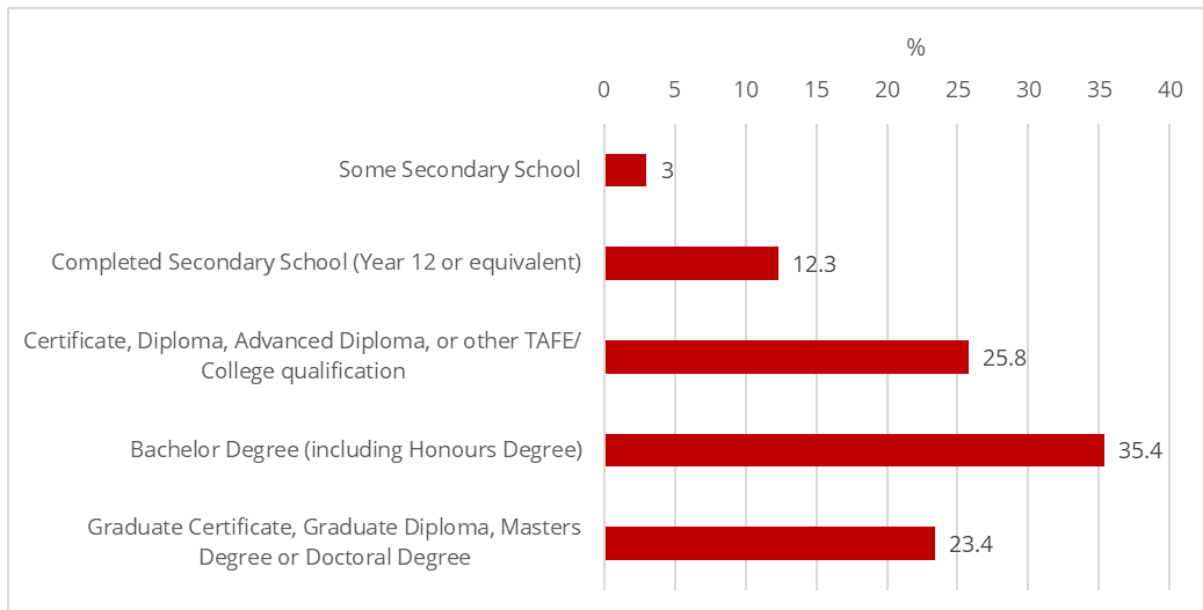


Figure 29: Highest education level of participants (n=799)

3.2.2. EMPLOYEE AWARENESS OF CLERKS AWARD

Next, we investigate the previous knowledge employees had of the Clerks Award, by gender, age, and industry sector, and explore their current knowledge regarding whether they are covered by this award or not.

Two-thirds (66.4%) of the employees surveyed were found to have at least heard about the Clerks Award, but only 15.5% said they knew 'a lot' about it. One third of respondents (n=271; 33.5%) indicated they 'did not know anything' about the Clerks Award before this survey.

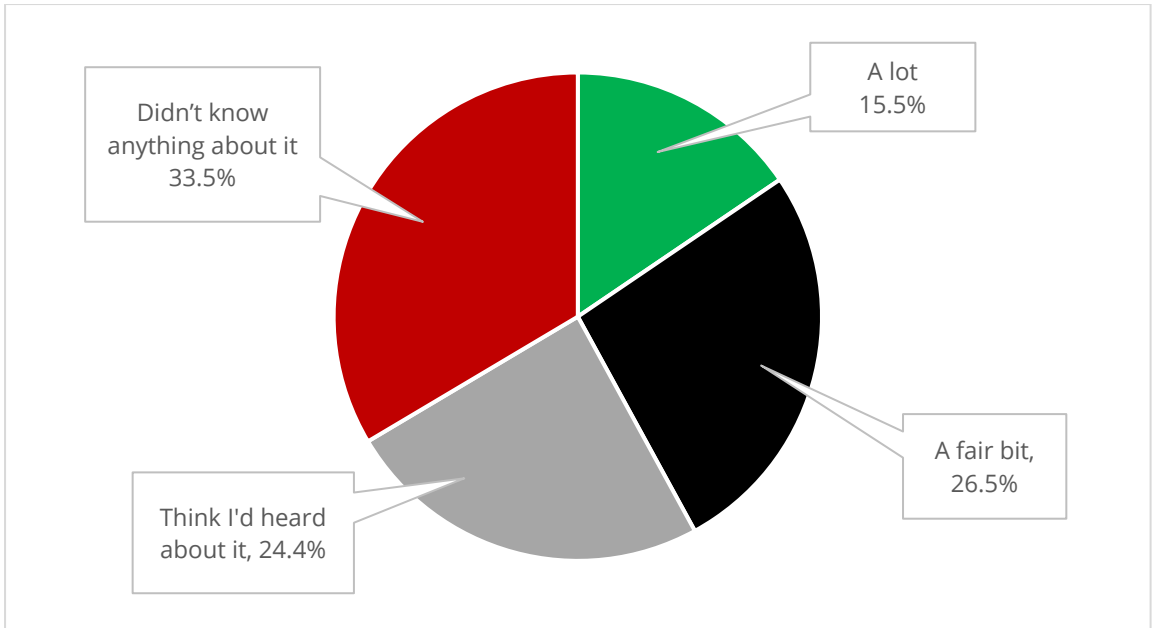


Figure 30: Knowledge of Clerks Award amongst survey participants (n=799)

One third (n=266; 34.5%) of survey respondents knew that the Clerks Award applied to them while 28.9% of respondents 'think' that the Clerks Award applies to them. Just over a third of respondents 'do not know' or are 'unsure' whether the Clerks Award applies to them (n=283; 36.7%).

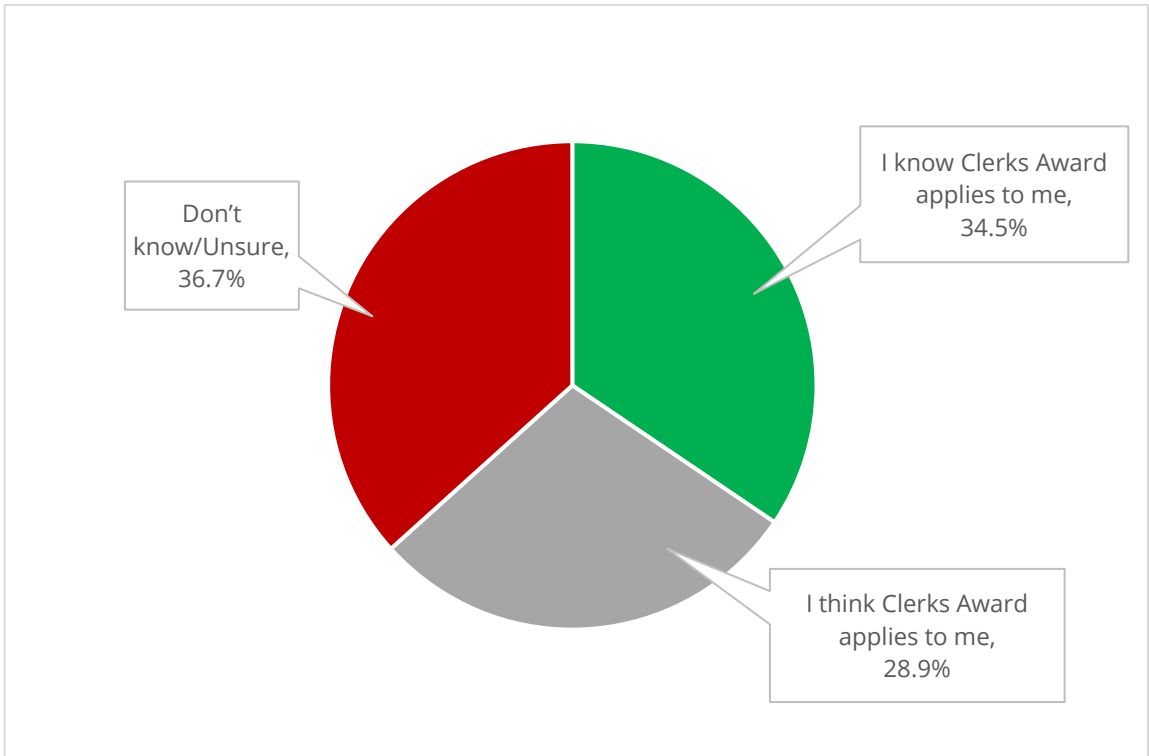


Figure 31: Knowledge of Clerks Award coverage amongst survey participants (n=772)

A higher percentage of male employees (n=130; 38.9%) compared to female employees (n=136; 31.1%) report knowing that the Clerks Award applies to them (this difference approached a level of statistical significance with a value of $p = .06$).

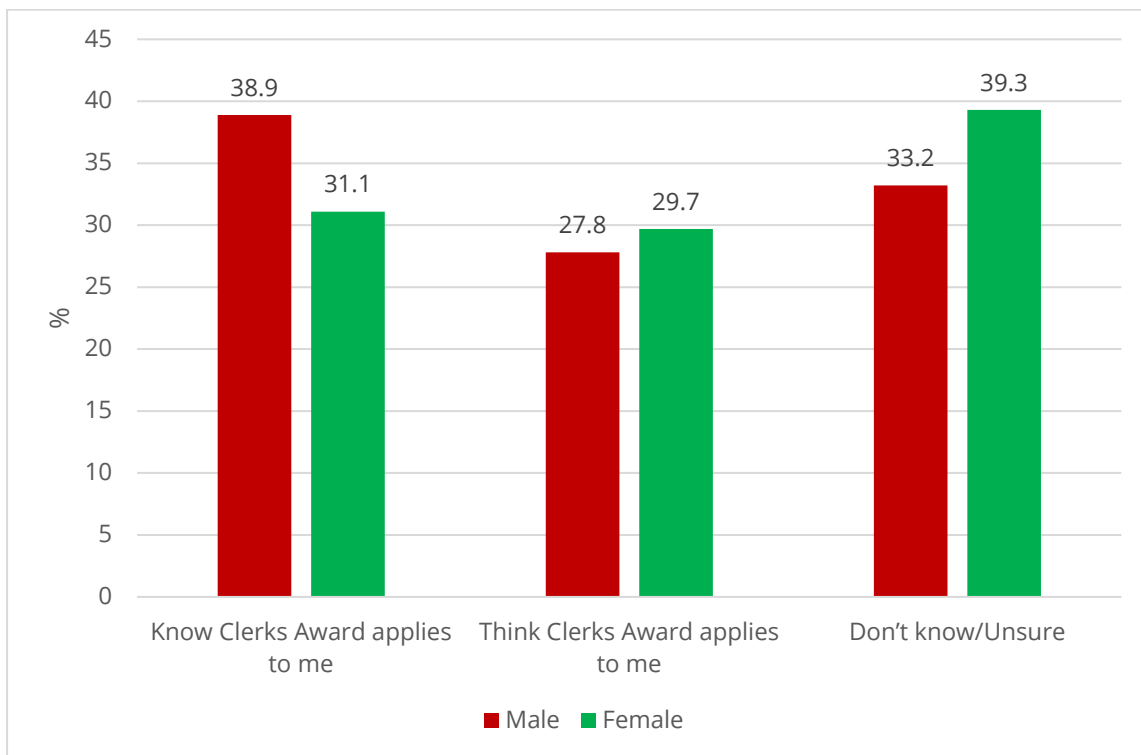


Figure 32: Knowledge of Clerks Award coverage by gender (n=772)

Looking only at industry sectors with a representation of n=50 or above in the final data sample, the greatest knowledge of Clerks Award coverage was found in the 'Professional, scientific and technical services' sector, with n=21 out of 61 (45.9%) employees indicating they knew they were covered by the Clerks Award.

The industry sector found to have the least awareness of Clerks Award coverage was 'Retail trade', where only n=19 out of 87 (21.8%) employees knew they were covered by the Clerks award, and n=53 out of 87 (60.9%) admitting they were 'unsure'.

Whilst further investigation would be required to ascertain the reason behind this low awareness of Clerks Award coverage amongst 'Retail trade' employees, one potential reason might be they are unsure whether they are covered by Clerks Award or the *General Retail Industry Award 2020* ([Retail Award](#)).

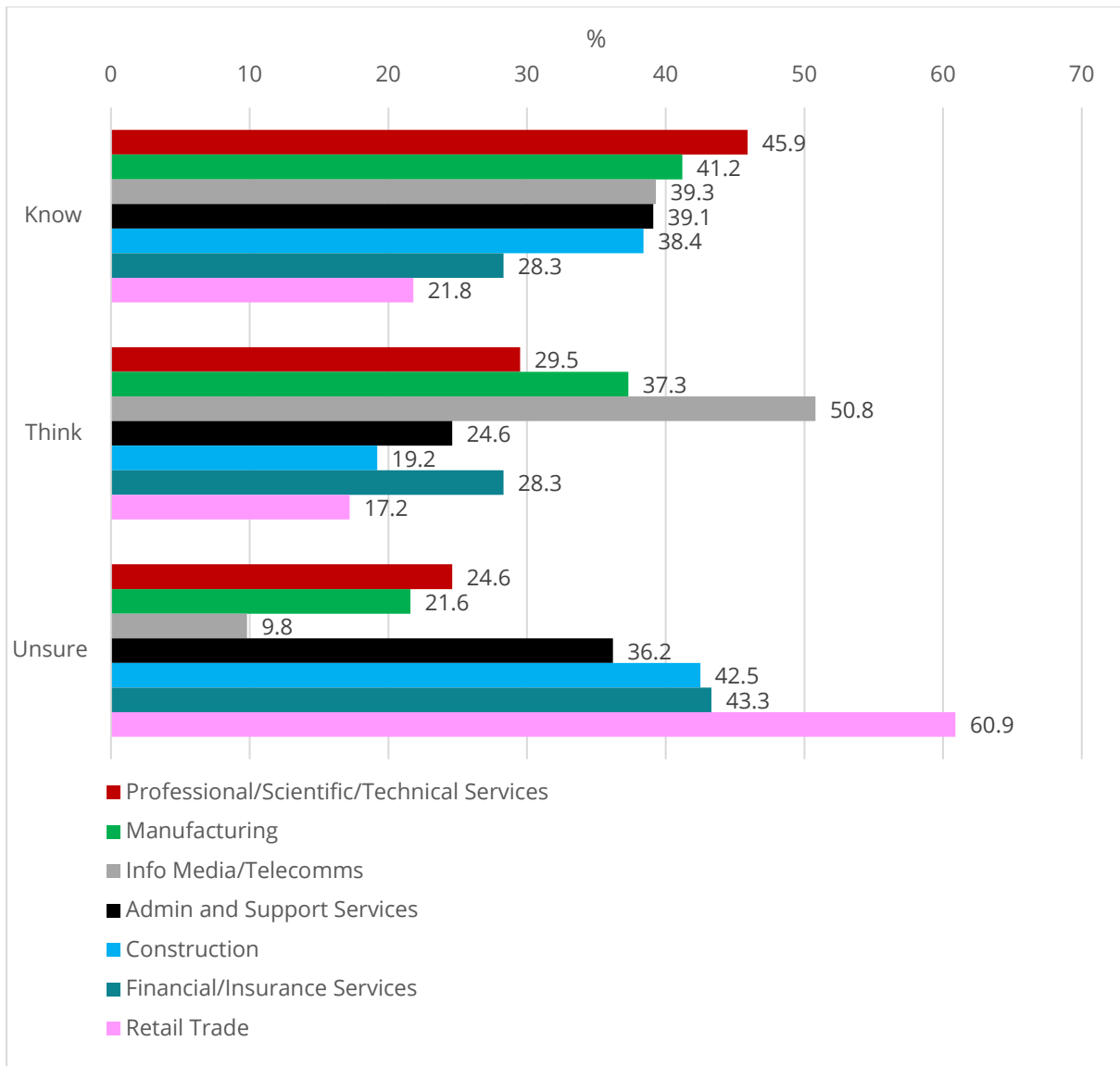


Figure 33: Knowledge of Clerks Award by industry sector

Looking only at states with a representation of n=50 or above in the final data sample, the greatest knowledge of Clerks Award coverage was found in New South Wales, with n=82 out of 230 employees (37.5%) in that state indicating they knew they were covered by the Clerks Award.

The state with the least knowledge of Clerks Award coverage was found to be South Australia, where only n=18 out of 59 (30.5%) employees knew they were covered by the Clerks award, and n=29 out of 59 (49.2%) admitted they were 'unsure'.

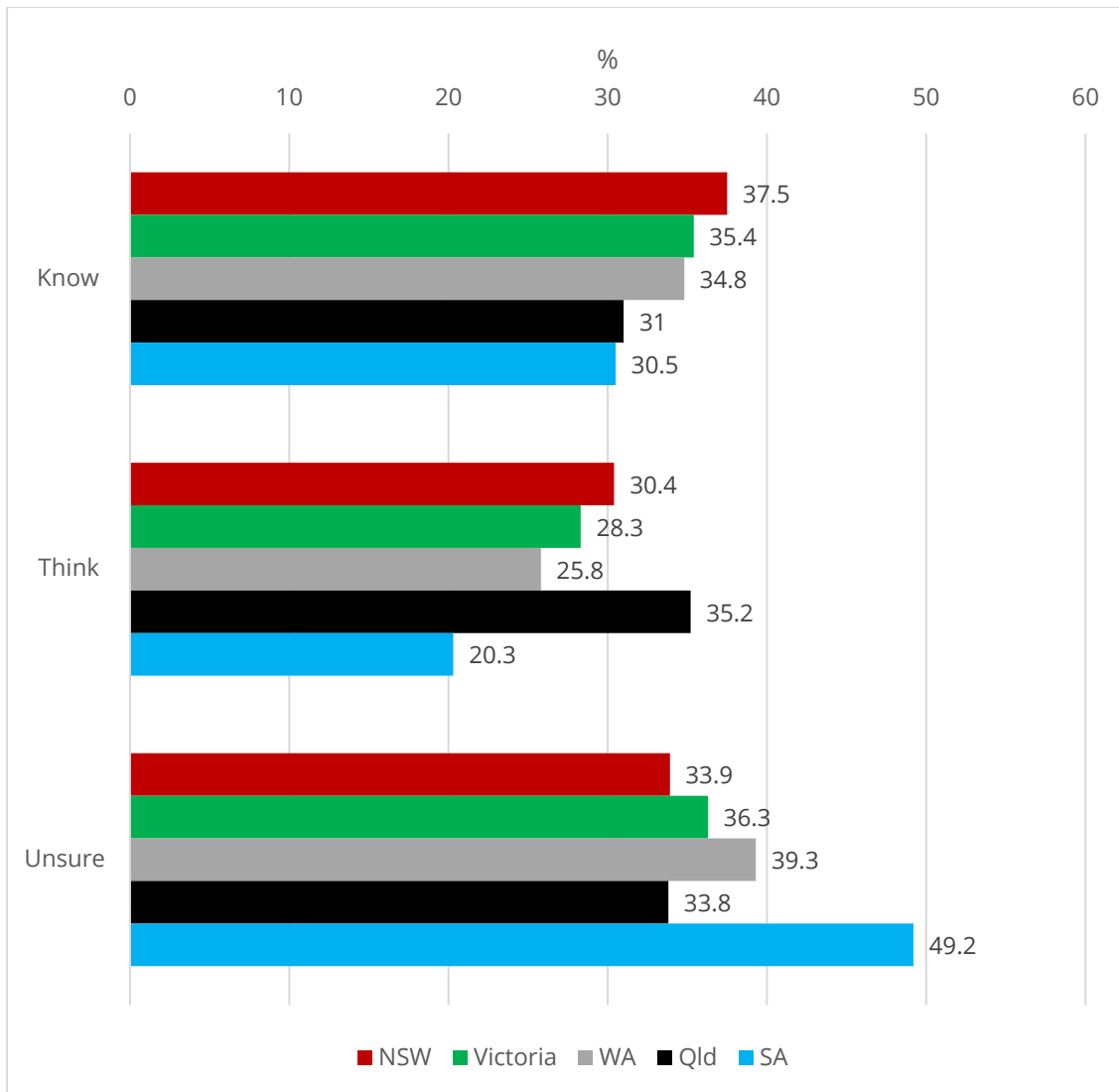


Figure 34: Knowledge of Clerks Award by State

When comparing knowledge of Clerks Award coverage between employees in metro areas versus regional areas, regional employees were found to be more likely to know that the Clerks Award applies to them, compared with employees in metro areas.

Only n=198 out of 594 employees (33.3%) from Greater Sydney, Greater Melbourne, Greater Brisbane, Greater Adelaide, Greater Perth, Greater Hobart and Greater Darwin indicated they knew they were covered by the Clerks Award, compared with n=68 out of 177 employees (38.4%) across the rest of NSW, Victoria, Queensland, South Australia, Western Australia, Tasmania and ACT.

The variation in awareness of Clerks Award coverage, across the different states and between metro and regional areas, may warrant further investigation to better understand why awareness in some areas is greater than others.

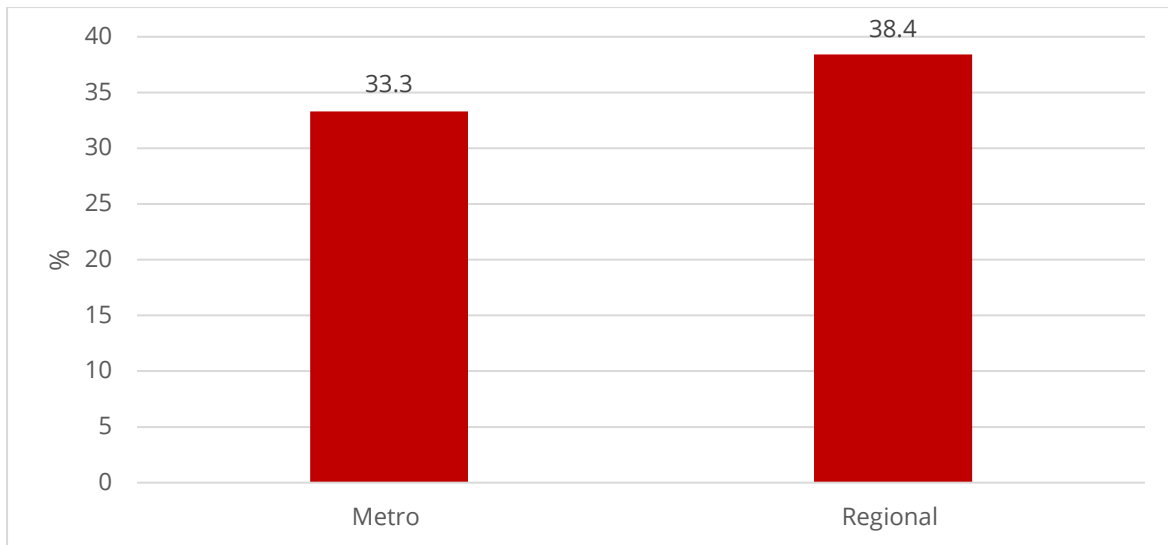


Figure 35: Knowledge of Clerks Award – Metro versus Regional (n=772)

Comparing age groups, the lowest level of awareness for Clerks Award coverage was found amongst the under 25s (26.9%). Awareness increased amongst the 25-34 (39.4%) and 35-44 age groups (38.0%), then dropped again amongst the 45-54 (28.1%) and 55-64 (28.7%) age groups.

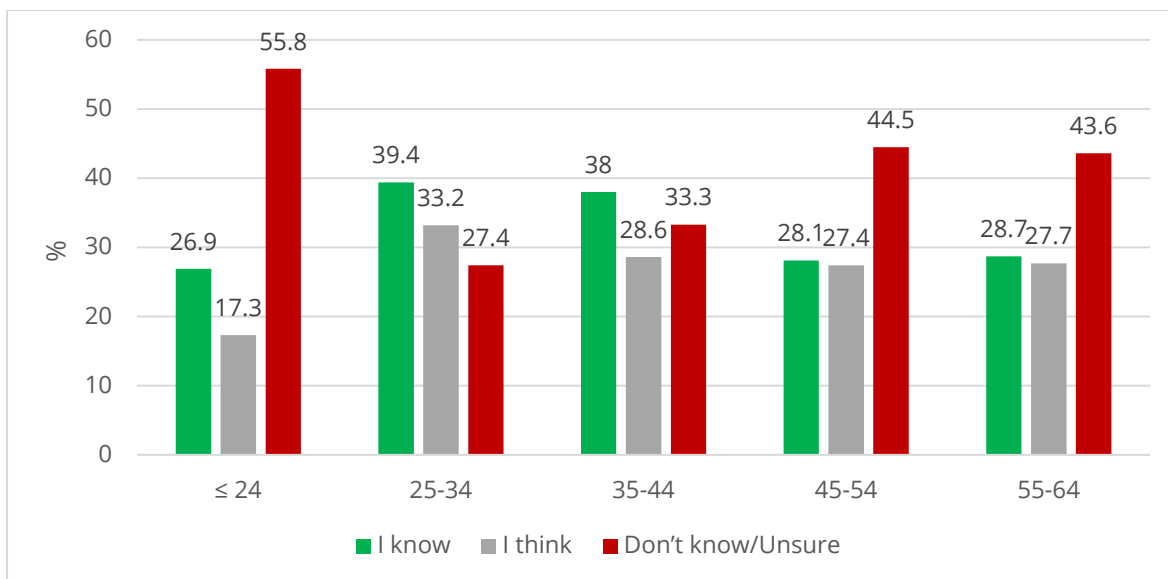


Figure 36: Knowledge of Clerks Award coverage by age group (n=772)

3.2.3. EMPLOYEE REQUESTS FOR WFH ARRANGEMENTS

The following section focuses on requests for WFH arrangements, by gender, age and role type, to better understand current WFH access and reasons why requests might be approved or declined.

A total of 45.5% (n=363) of employees in the survey were found to have requested WFH arrangements. 64.1% (n=233) of these WFH requests were approved, 29.7% (n=108) were

partially approved while 6.1% (n=22) of WFH requests were declined.

11.1% (n=184) of employees in the survey were found to be able to WFH without requesting permission, 12.6% had not made a request but had been WFH since Covid-19, 17.8% (n=142) do not currently WFH but would like to, whilst 13.0% (n=104) of employees said they did not want to WFH.

Overall, approximately two-thirds (66.4%; n=531) of employees indicated they had an entitlement to WFH to some extent, which aligns closely with recent HILDA (2024) data which says 62.7% of clerical and administrative workers have an entitlement to WFH. However, the figure for this survey could be slightly higher, given those who indicated they were 'not interested in WFH' may also have an entitlement to access these arrangements.

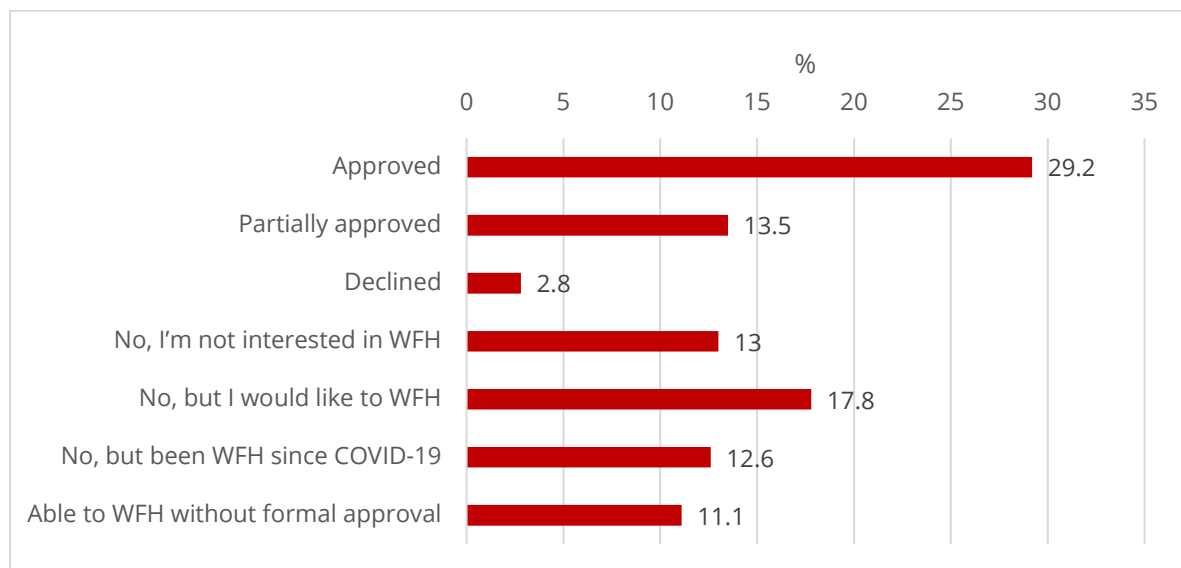


Figure 37: Requests for WFH arrangements (n=799)

When analysing WFH requests by gender, similar percentages of male employees (46.6%) and female employees (44.7%) were found to have made a request, and similar percentages of those requests were approved (29.4% versus 29.0%). However, male employees were more likely to have a request partially approved (16.4% versus 11.3%), whilst female employees were far more likely to have a request declined.

Only n=2 males out of a sample of 347 male employees (0.6%) reported they had a request to WFH declined, compared with n=20 out of 452 female employees (4.4%), meaning female employees are more than seven times more likely (7.3x) to have been refused a request to WFH. If we look just at requests this figure rises further, with n=20 out of the 202 requests from female employees being declined (9.9%), compared with n=2 out of 161 (1.2%) requests from male employees.

However, more female employees reported being able to WFH without a formal approval (13.1% versus 8.6%), and more males were found to have no interest in WFH (15.6%, versus 11.5%).

	Approved	Partially approved	Declined	No, I'm not interested in WFH	No, but would like to WFH	No, but been WFH since COVID-19	Able to WFH without formal approval	Total
Male	102	57	2	54	55	47	30	347
Female	131	51	20	50	87	54	59	452
Total	233	108	22	104	142	101	89	799

Table 1: Requests for WFH arrangements by gender (n=799)

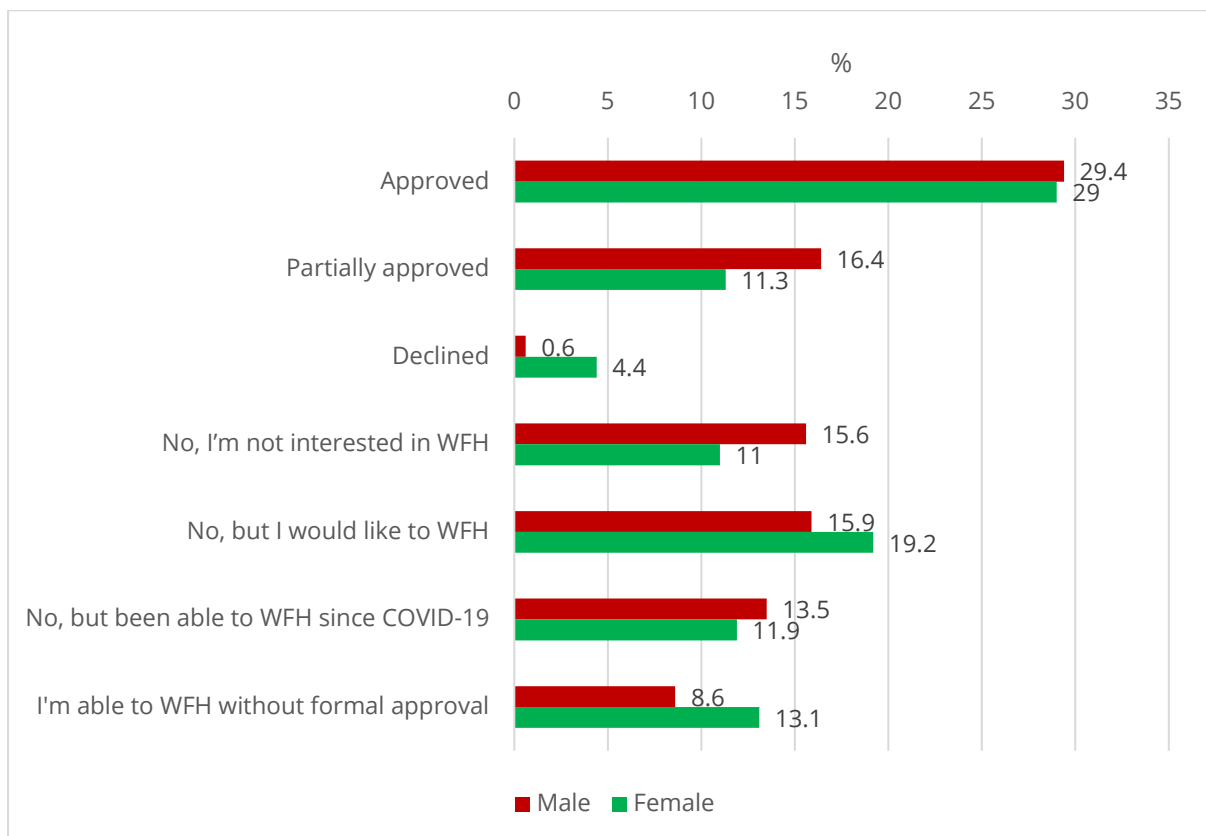


Figure 38: Requests for WFH arrangements by gender (n=799)

Looking next at WFH requests by age group, those most likely to have a request approved were the 25-34 age group (35.1%), followed by the 45-54 age group (29.6%) and the 35-44 age group (28.4%). Older employees were found to be more likely to be able to WFH without formal approval, with 15.5% of the 55-64 age group able to do so, followed by 15.1% of the 45-54 age group.

The youngest employees were the least likely to have a WFH request approved (15.1%), the most likely to not want to WFH (30.2%), and the most likely to have not made a request but would like to WFH (28.3%). However, the sample size for this age group is small (n=53; 6.7%), so further investigation would be required to confirm if this is significant or not.

The 65+ age group were excluded from this analysis due to the small sample size (n=6).

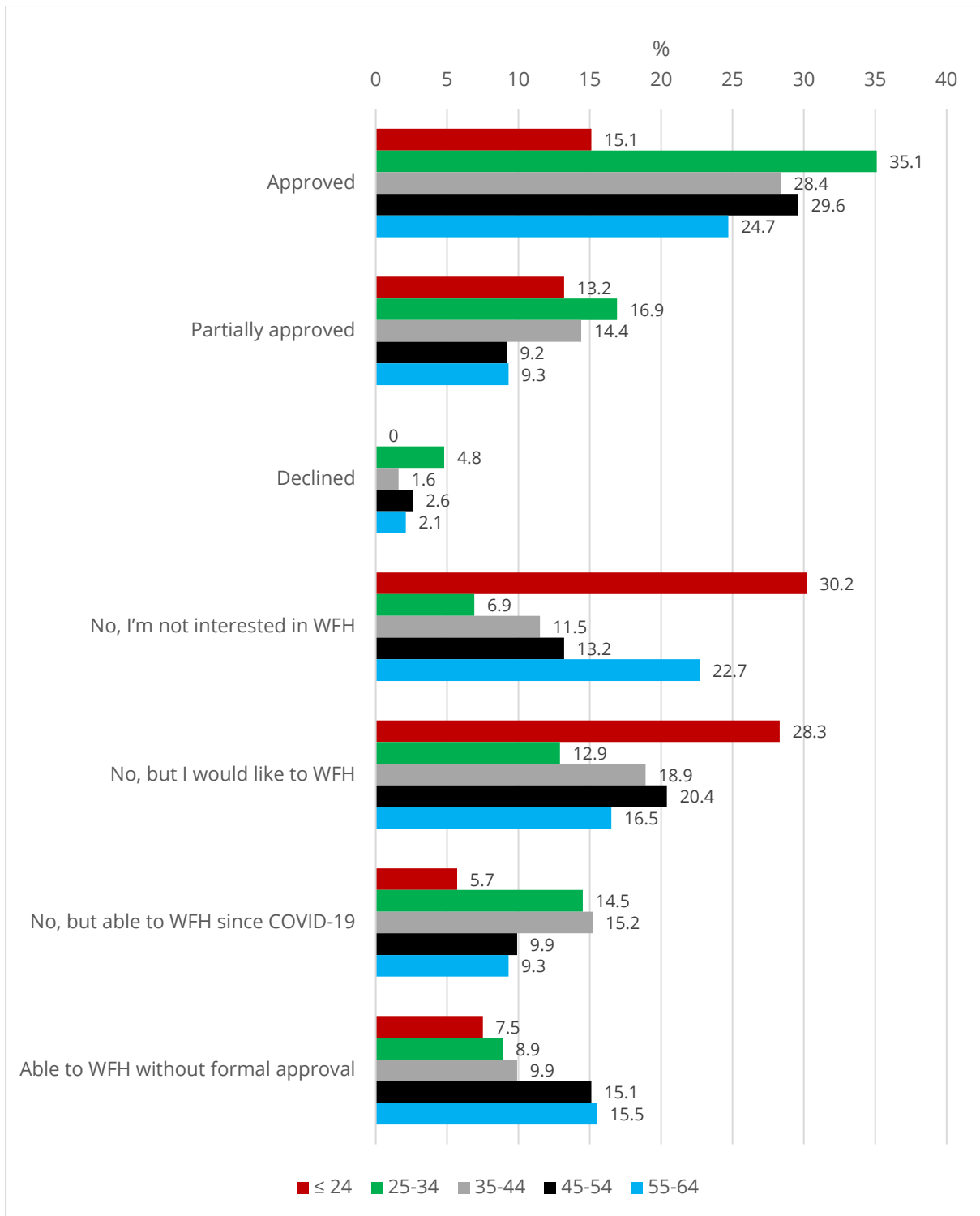


Figure 39: WFH requests by age group (n=799)

Looking at requests for WFH arrangements by role type, 'Managers/Senior administrators' (34.2%) were most likely to have a request approved, 'Forepersons/Supervisors' (37.5%) were most likely to have a request partially approved, whilst 'Sales/Service providers' (29.6%) were the most likely to be not interested in WFH.

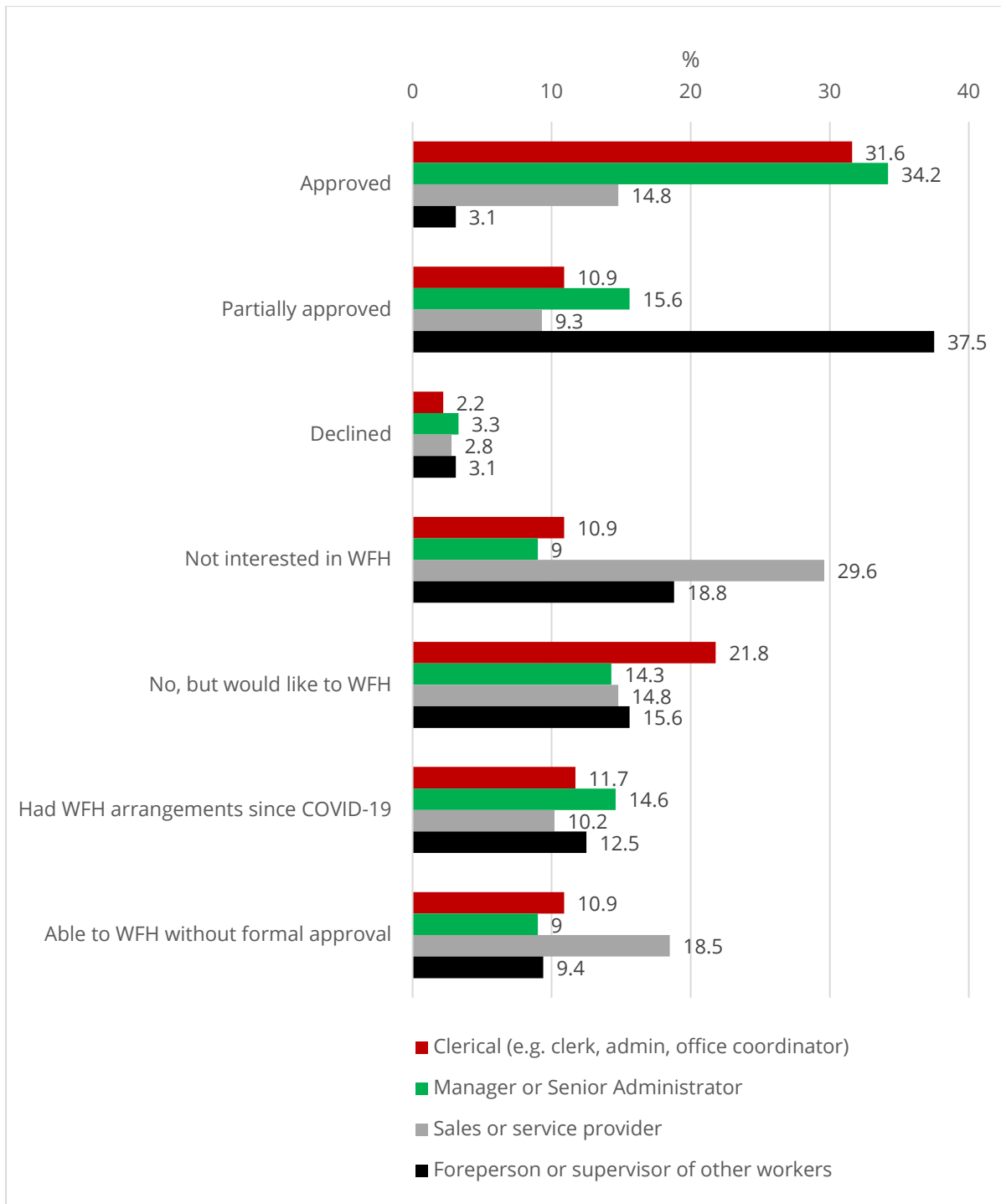


Figure 40: WFH requests by role type (n=799)

Examining WFH requests by both gender and role type, it was observed that 39.8% of male clerical employees had a WFH request approved, compared with only 28% of female clerical employees.

Conversely, 39.3% of female 'Manager/Senior administrators' were found to have had a WFH request approved, compared with only 29.8% of male 'Manager/Senior administrators'. However, female 'Manager/Senior administrators' were also the most likely

employees to have a WFH request denied, with n=10 out of 140 (7.1%) female 'Manager/Senior administrators' reporting having had a request denied.

'Foreperson/Supervisor of other workers' were excluded from this section of the analysis due to a very small sample size (n=21 male; n=11 female).

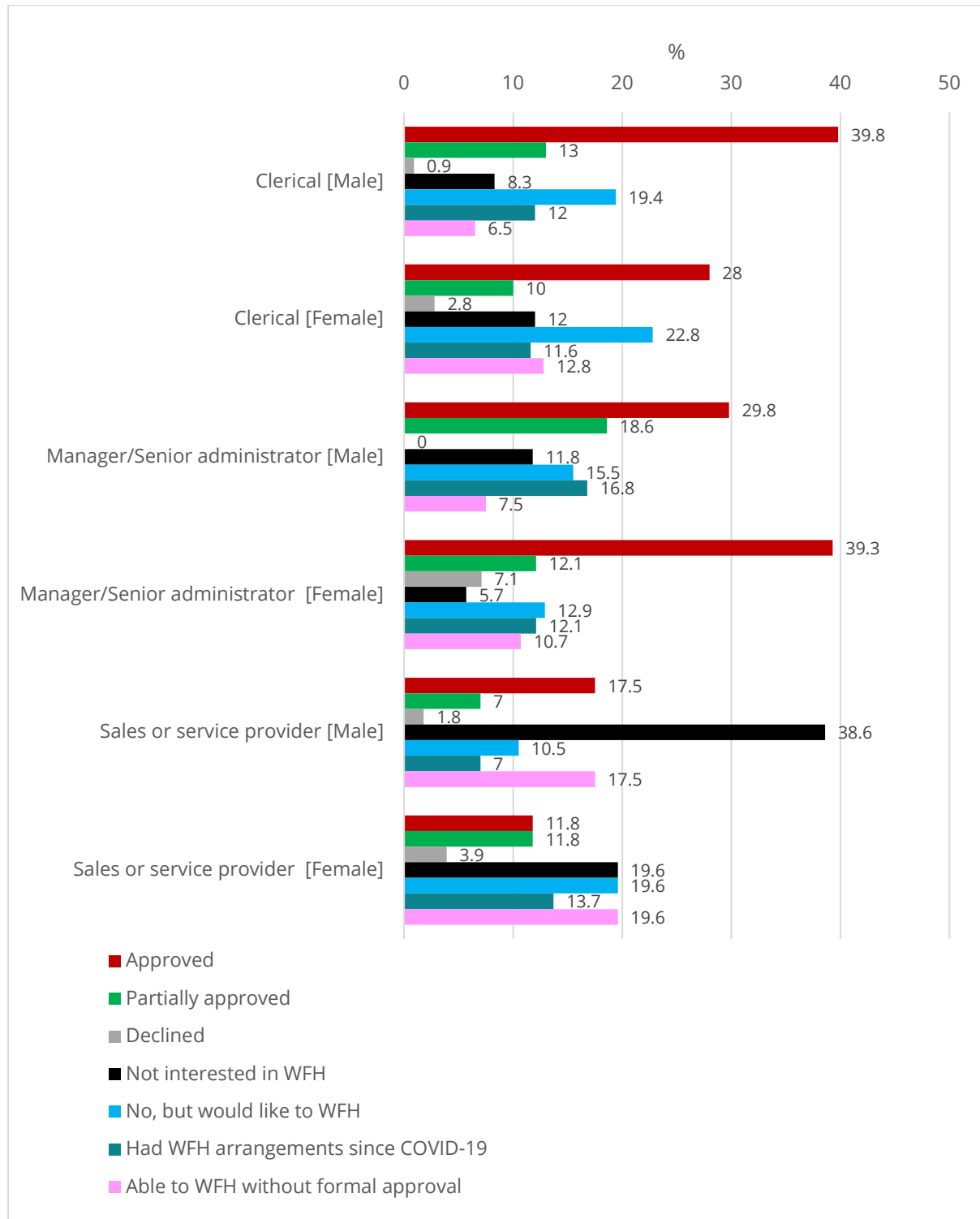


Figure 41: WFH requests by role type and gender (n=799)

According to the employees in this survey, 'increased productivity/efficiency' (38.8%), 'policies which encourage WFH and flexible work' (33.5%), and 'improved work engagement' (29.9%) are the primary reasons employers support WFH. When considering reasons that relate to employee needs, parenting and caring responsibilities was the most common reason. Managing health or personal circumstances, such as an illness, or pregnancy or age, were other reasons for approving WFH arrangements.

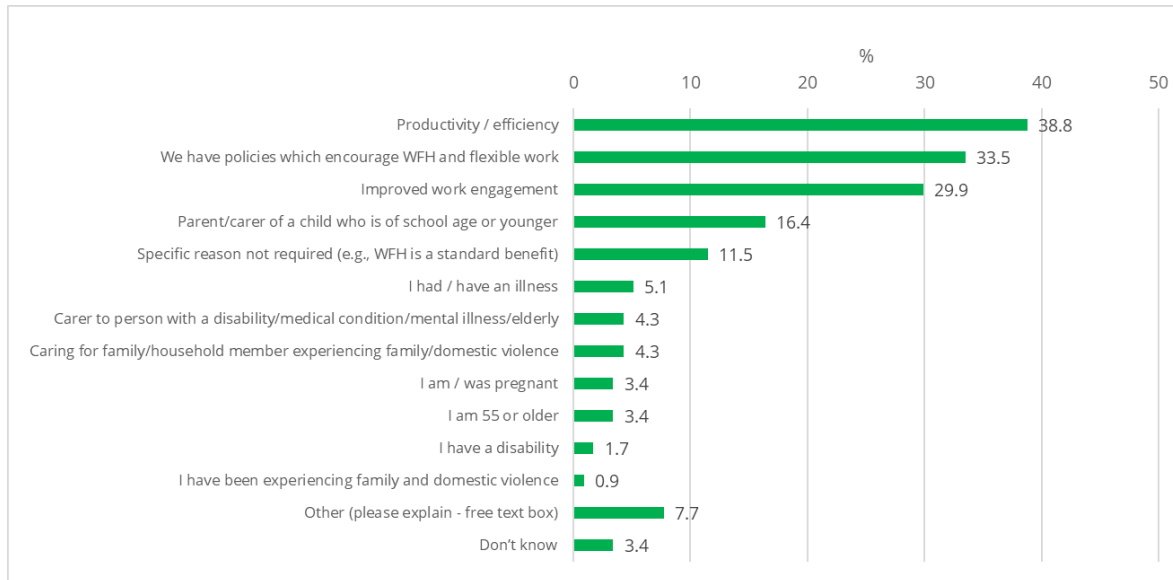


Figure 42: Reasons WFH is supported (n=531)

*Participants were able to select multiple responses

Whilst the sample of data for declined WFH requests is very small (n=22), and lacking statistical significance, it was interesting to note that 'employer preferences for office-based work' (n=11; 50%), 'jobs that require regular in-person interactions with clients or customers' (also n=11; 50%) and 'tasks that can't be completed from home' (n=10; 45.5%), were the primary reasons that employers decline WFH requests.

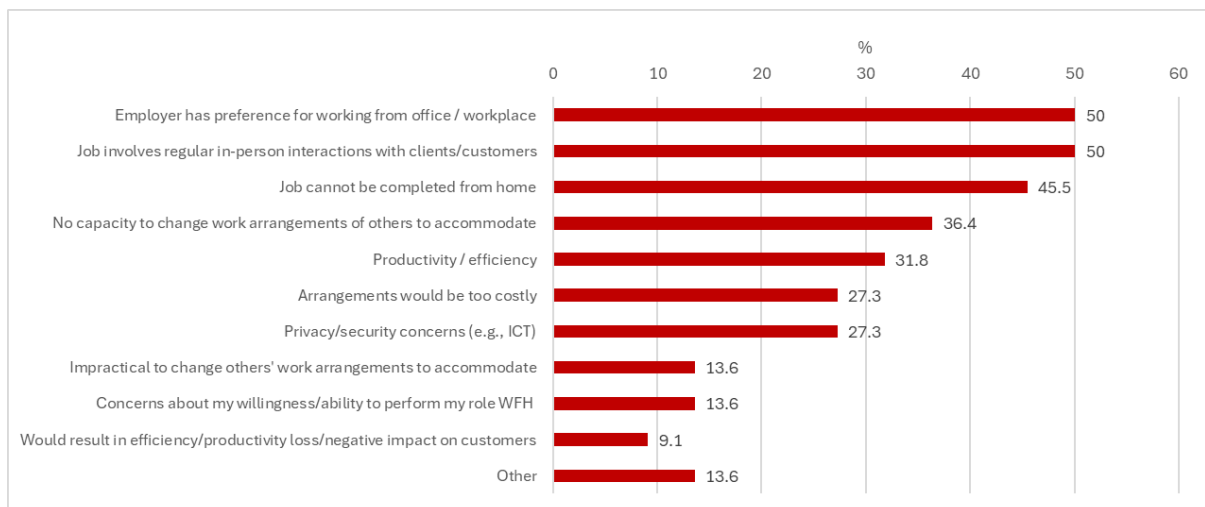


Figure 43: Reasons WFH requests were declined (n=22)

3.2.4. CURRENT LEVELS OF WFH

In this section we investigate current WFH practices, based on those who indicated they have had a WFH request approved, partially approved, were able to WFH without formal approval, or had been WFH since COVID-19 (n=531).

Almost half of these employees (n=247; 46.5%) indicated they were currently WFH, another 32.2% (n=171) said they were also WFH but would like to do so more often, and 21.3% (n=113) said they were not currently WFH. This means over half (n=418; 52.3%) of the entire sample of n=799 employees surveyed are currently WFH to some extent.

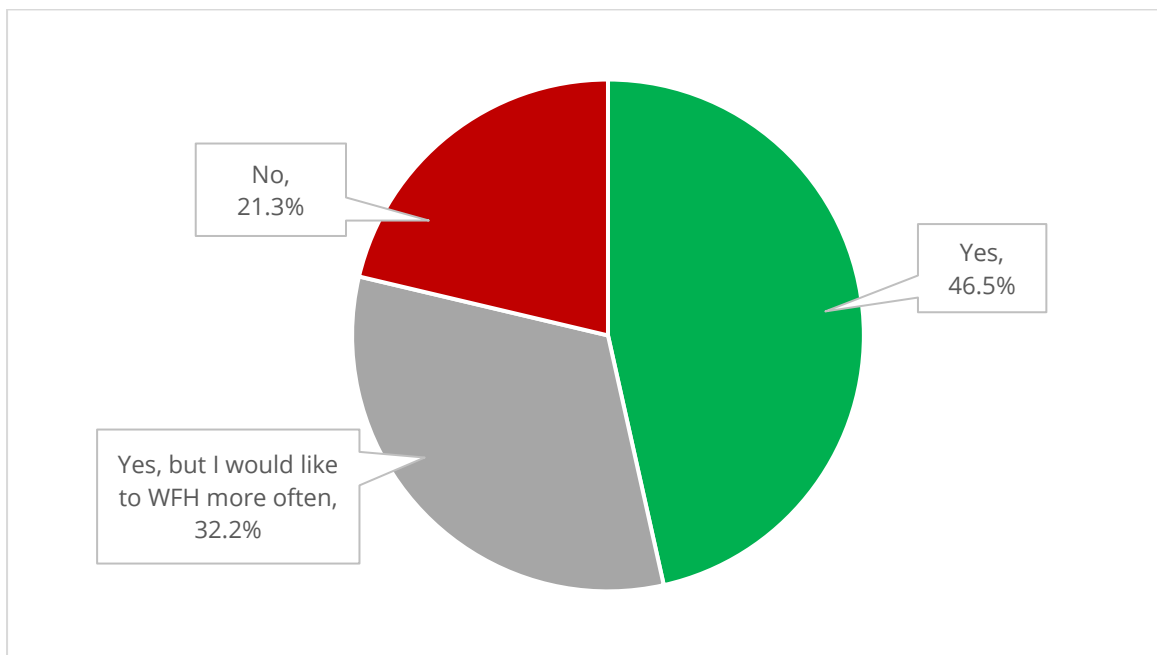


Figure 44: Current WFH arrangements (n=531)

No significant gender differences were observed when analysing current employee access to WFH arrangements between male (45.7%) and female (47.1%) employees.

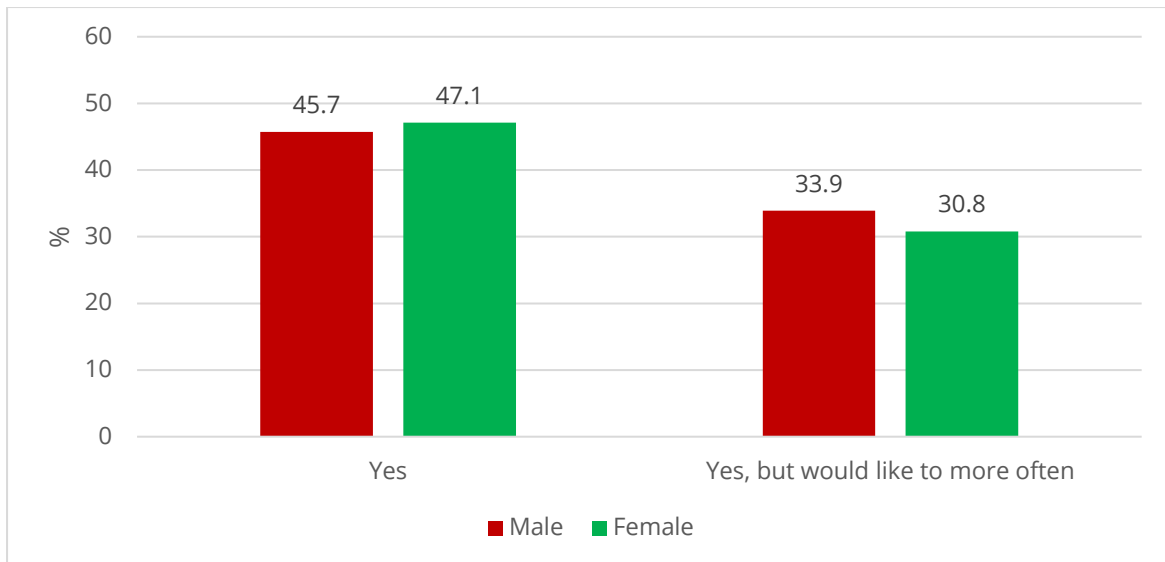


Figure 45: Employees currently WFH by gender (n=531)

Similarly, no clear relationship was identified between access to WFH arrangements and weekly income, with the lowest earners (< \$1000 per week) being just as likely to currently have access to WFH arrangements (42%) as the highest earners (\$3000+; 39.3%).

This contrasts with findings from investigations into WFH in other professions, such as the study of academic staff at Australian universities by Peetz et al. (2022), which found WFH is associated with higher wages for men and women.

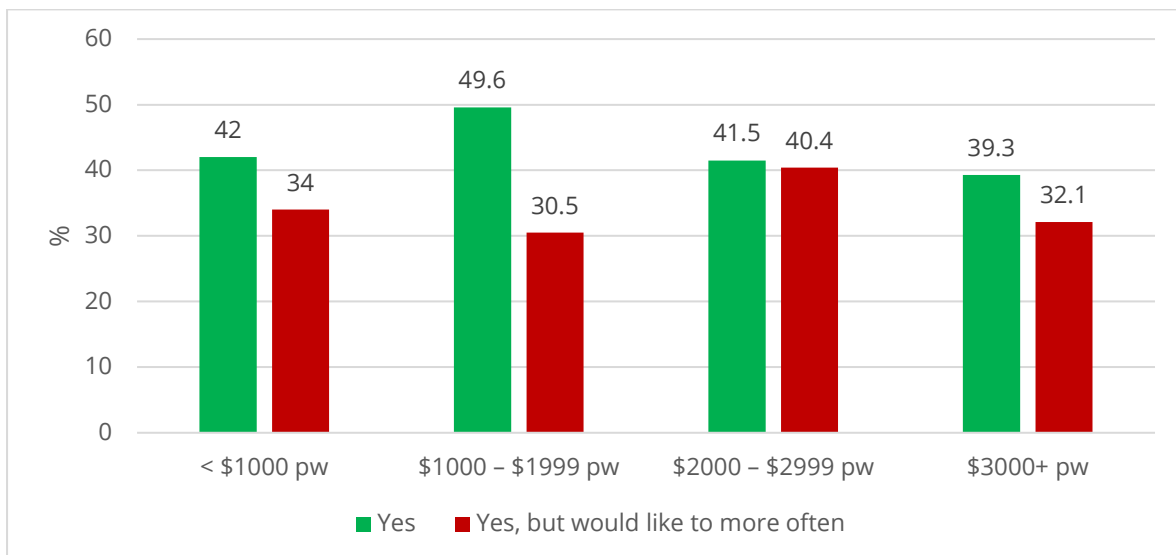


Figure 46: Access to WFH Arrangements vs weekly income

Looking at current WFH practices by both role type and gender, a slightly higher percentage of male 'Clerical' employees (50.6%) were found to currently WFH compared with female 'Clerical' employees (45.5%), whilst a higher percentage of female 'Managers/Senior administrators' (53.8%) were found to currently WFH compared to male

'Managers/Senior administrators' (45.3%).

The sample for 'Sales and service provider' employees was too small to be significant (male n=29; female n=28) but also showed indicated similar access across male and female employees (42.9% versus 41.4%). 'Foreperson/Supervisors of other workers' were excluded from the analysis due to a sample size of only n=20.

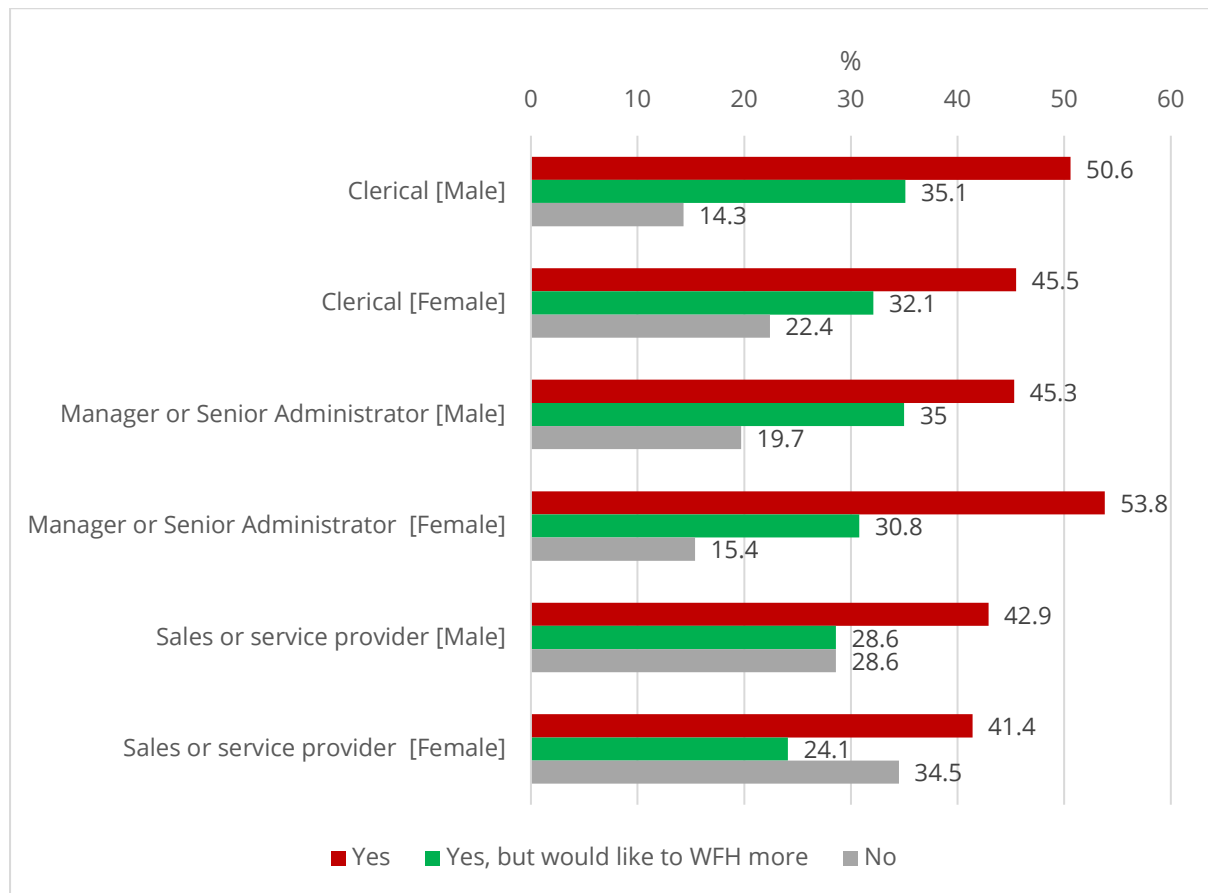


Figure 47: Employees currently WFH by gender and role type (n=531)

Looking next at what percentage of their overall work hours were spent WFH, almost one in five employees (18.4%) revealed they spent less than 10% of their total work hours WFH. Whilst 32.7% of participants indicated they work at least half of their hours from home, 56.5% said they worked less than 40% of their work hours from home.

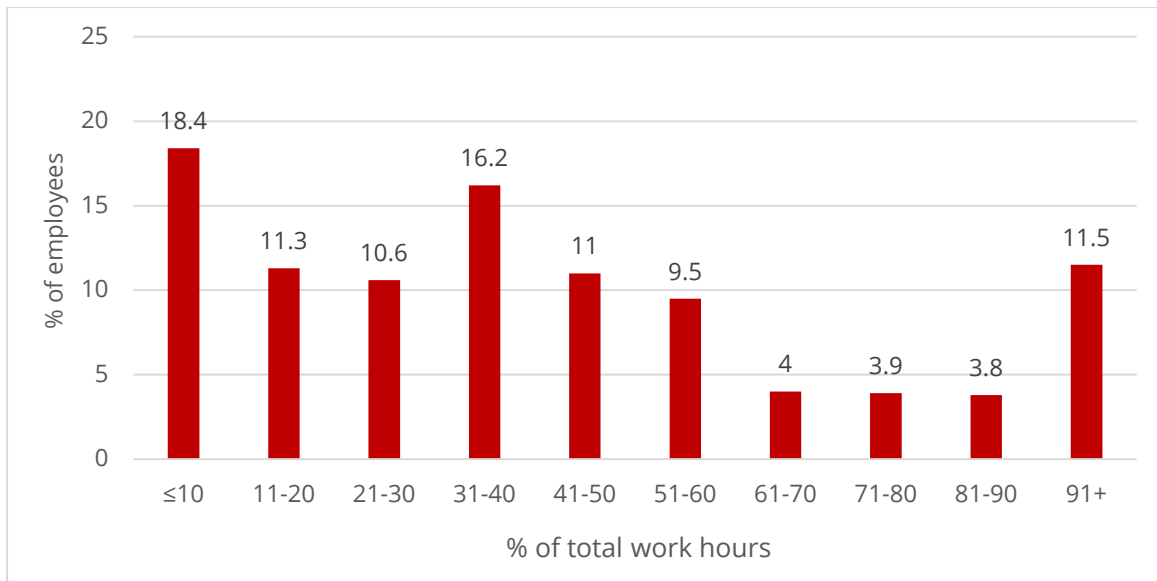


Figure 48: Percentage of total work hours spend WFH (n=531)

3.2.5. BENEFITS EXPERIENCED FROM ACCESS TO WFH ARRANGEMENTS

In this next section, we discuss the range of benefits experienced by the survey participants as a result of their ability to WFH.

When questioned about any benefits experienced from the ability to WFH, 3 in 5 respondents (60.1%) selected 'time saved.'

Around half (49.7%) of the participants in the employee survey also felt they had experienced 'productivity/performance' gains due to the ability to WFH, whilst a similar number (48.2%) had experienced 'financial savings,' and ease of 'managing household' chores (46.1%).

Only 5.5% of the employees surveyed reported experiencing no benefits from the ability to WFH.



Figure 49: Benefits experienced from ability to WFH (n=531)

Disaggregating these results by gender, female employees reported experiencing greater levels of benefit for ‘time saved’ (67.1% versus 51.3%) and ‘household management’ (51.5% versus 39.4%), whilst male employees reported experiencing greater benefits for ‘sport/exercise’ (36.4% versus 24.1%).

The ‘household management’ result in particular supports previous Commission findings about the unequal burden of household work for females that WFH and suggests this has not changed since the COVID-19 pandemic (Hopkins & Bardoel, 2020).

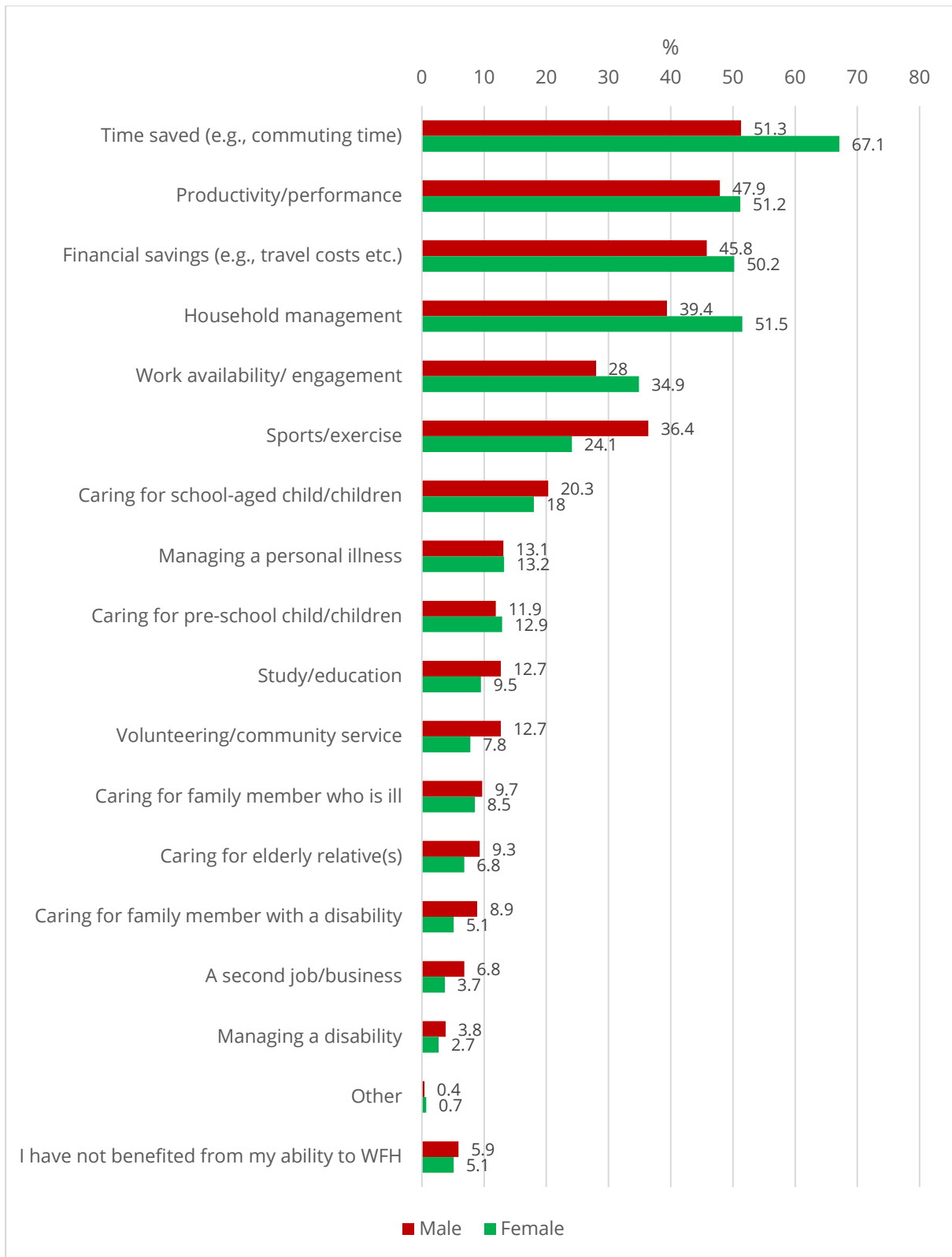


Figure 50: Benefits experienced from ability to WFH by gender (n=531)

Looking at work-life balance (WLB), more than 4 in 5 of the employees surveyed (85.7%) identified the ability to WFH as having either a 'moderate' or 'significant' positive impact on their WLB, whilst only 3.4% said it had some kind of negative impact on WLB.

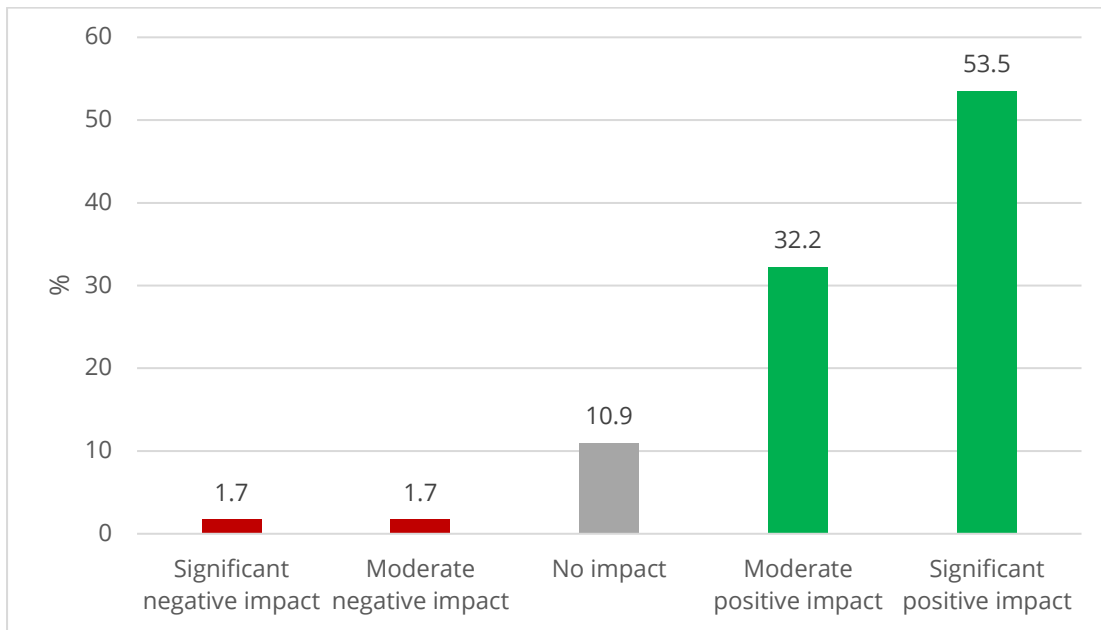


Figure 51: Impact WFH has on WLB balance (n=531)

No significant gender differences were found when it came to WFH and WLB. The ability to WFH had a slightly more positive impact on the WLB of male employees compared to female employees, with n=131 out of 236 male employees (55.5%) saying it had a 'significant positive impact' on their WLB, compared with 51.9% of female employees.

Therefore, WFH has a similar and largely positive impact on the WLB of both male and female clerical employees.

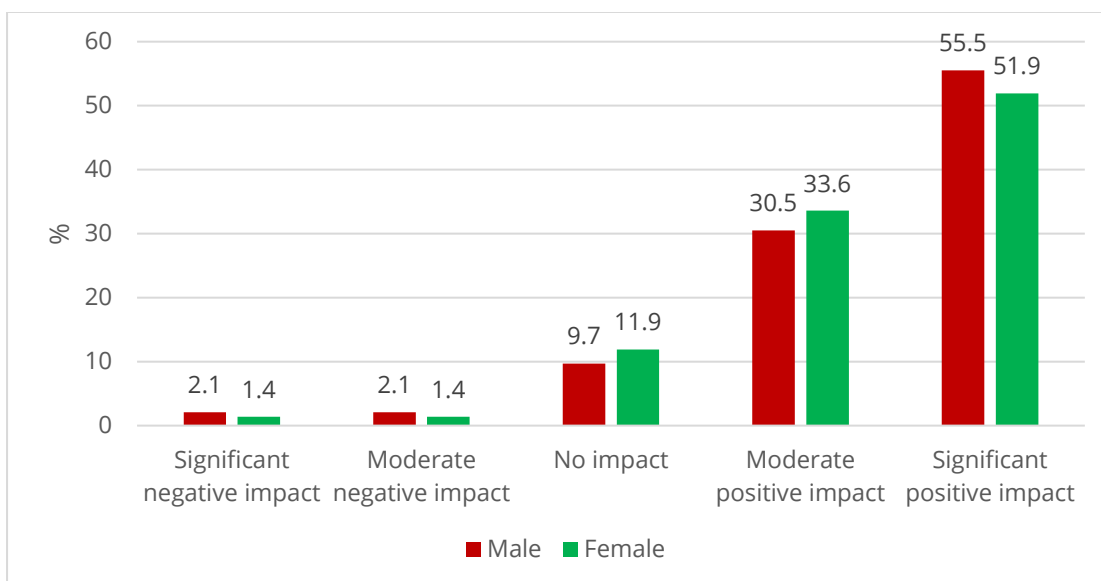


Figure 52: Impact WFH has on WLB by gender (n=531)

Three quarters (75.7%) of survey respondents said that WFH has had a 'moderate' or 'significant positive impact' on their mental health, whilst only 4.9% of employees surveyed said that WFH had a 'negative impact' on their mental health. This aligns with previous research involving Australian workers, which concluded WFH was a catalyst for improvements in health, wellbeing and WLB (Moglia et al., 2022).

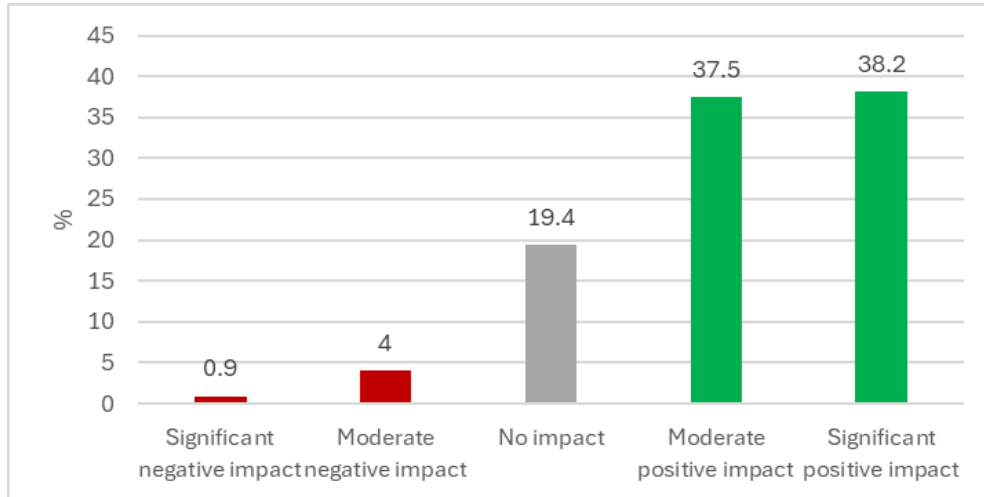


Figure 53: Impact WFH has on mental health (n=531)

Whilst more male employees said WFH had a significant impact on their WLB than female employees, more female employees (40.3%) said WFH had a significant impact on their mental health than male employees (35.6%). However, the differences were small (40.3% versus 35.6%), and both male and females identified the positive impact on WLB as being greater than that on their mental health.

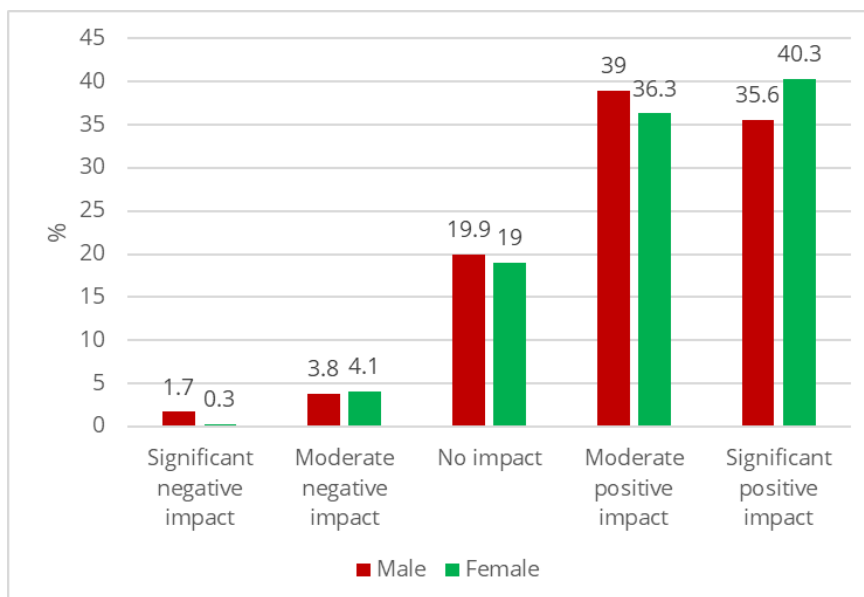


Figure 54: Impact WFH has on mental health by gender (n=531)

Two thirds of survey respondents (66.9%) said being able to WFH has had a 'moderate' or 'significant' positive impact on their physical health, whilst 6.6% said it has had a 'negative' impact.

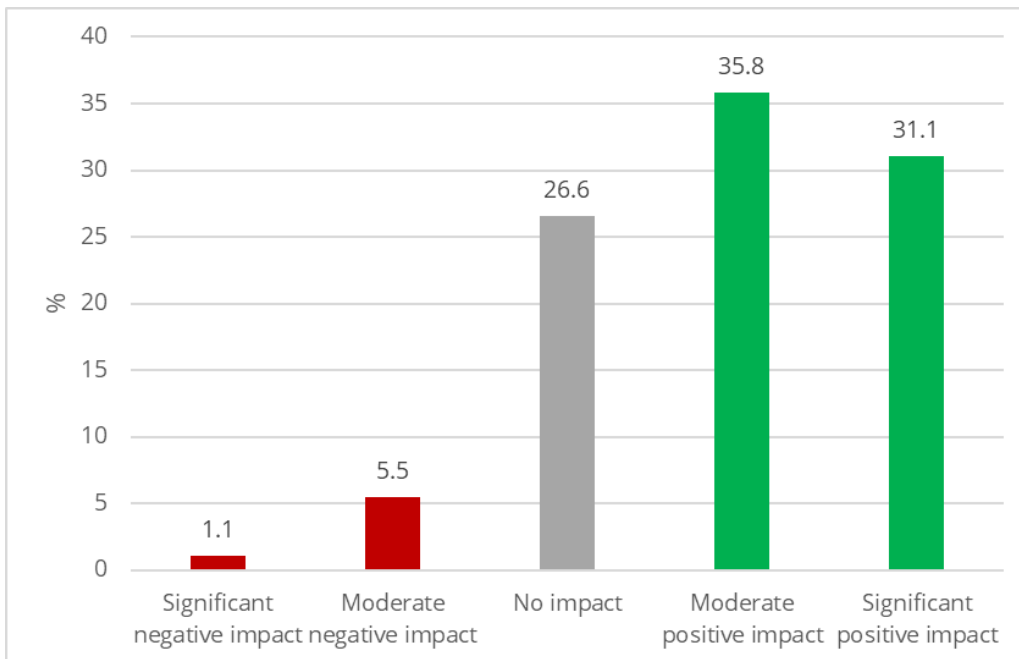


Figure 55: Impact WFH has on physical health (n=531)

Three quarters (75.3%) of survey respondents believe their ability to WFH has had a 'moderate' or 'significant' positive impact on their 'performance/productivity,' whilst only 5.7% think it has a negative impact.

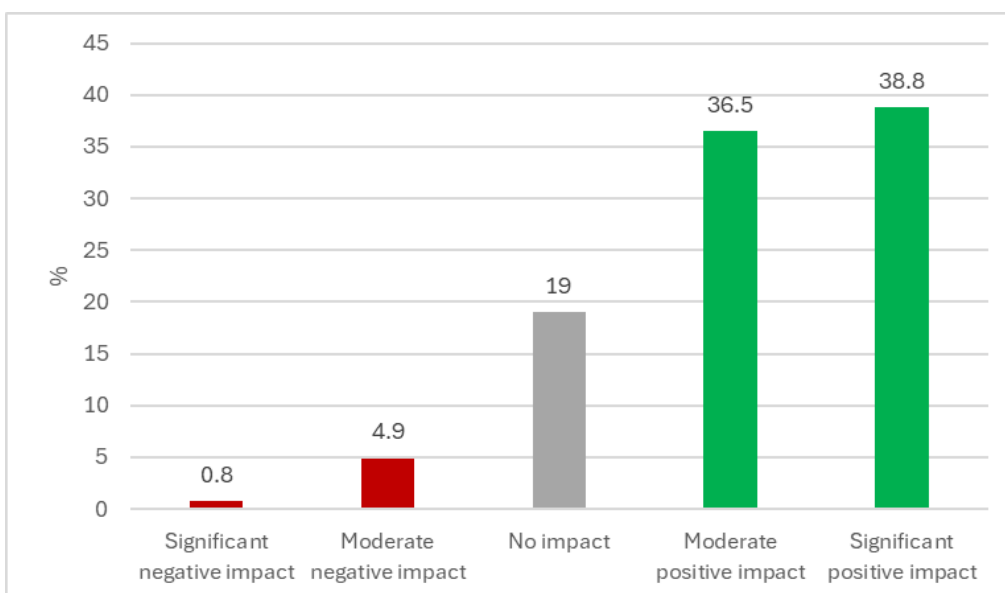


Figure 56: Relationship between WFH and work performance/productivity (n=531)

3.2.6. IMPACT OF WFH ARRANGEMENTS ON EMPLOYEE HOURS WORKED

In this section we investigated how WFH impacts upon the hours worked by employees in terms of whether they work longer or shorter hours when WFH, how much flexibility they have to control their hours, and what hours they work outside of the ordinary Clerks Award hours.

N=384 out of 459 employees (83.7%) indicated they worked outside of the Clerks Award ordinary award hours to some extent when WFH. More than a quarter did this 'always' (7.2%) or 'often' (18.3%), whereas nearly 3 in 5 did so less frequently, either 'sometimes' (32.7%) or 'rarely' (25.5%). 16.3% said they 'never' worked outside the ordinary Clerks Award hours when WFH.

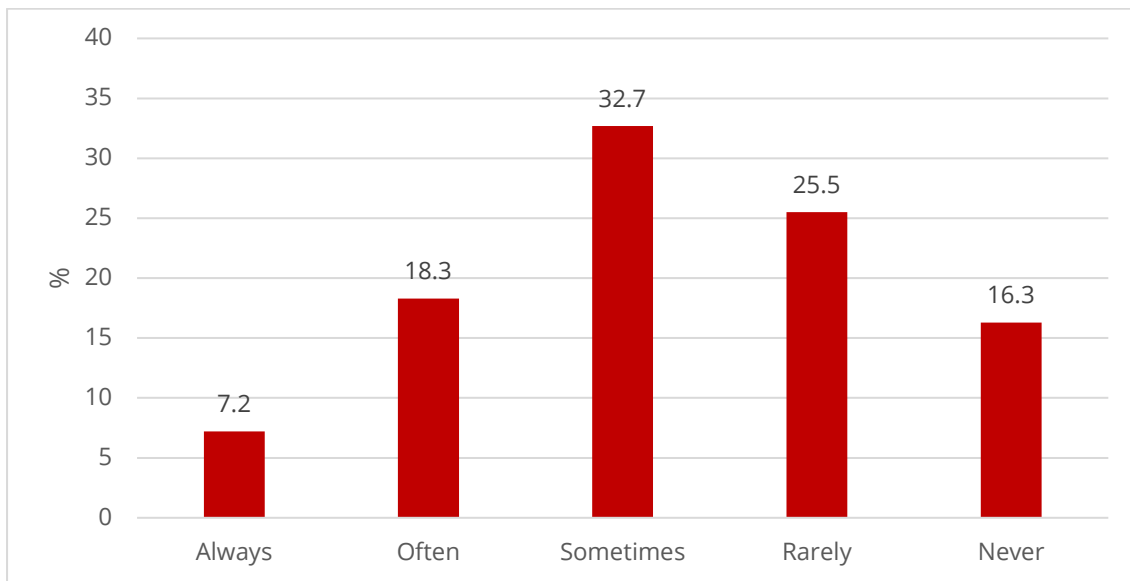


Figure 57: Working outside ordinary Clerks Award hours when WFH

The most common time that work is performed outside of the Clerks Award ordinary hours when WFH was before 7am (Mon-Fri), and after 7pm (Mon-Fri).

Over a quarter (26.3%) of clerical employees said they WFH before 7am on weekdays either 'always' or 'often', whilst a similar number (25.0%) said they 'always' or 'often' did so after 7pm Mon-Fri, with only 10.7% saying they 'never' did this.

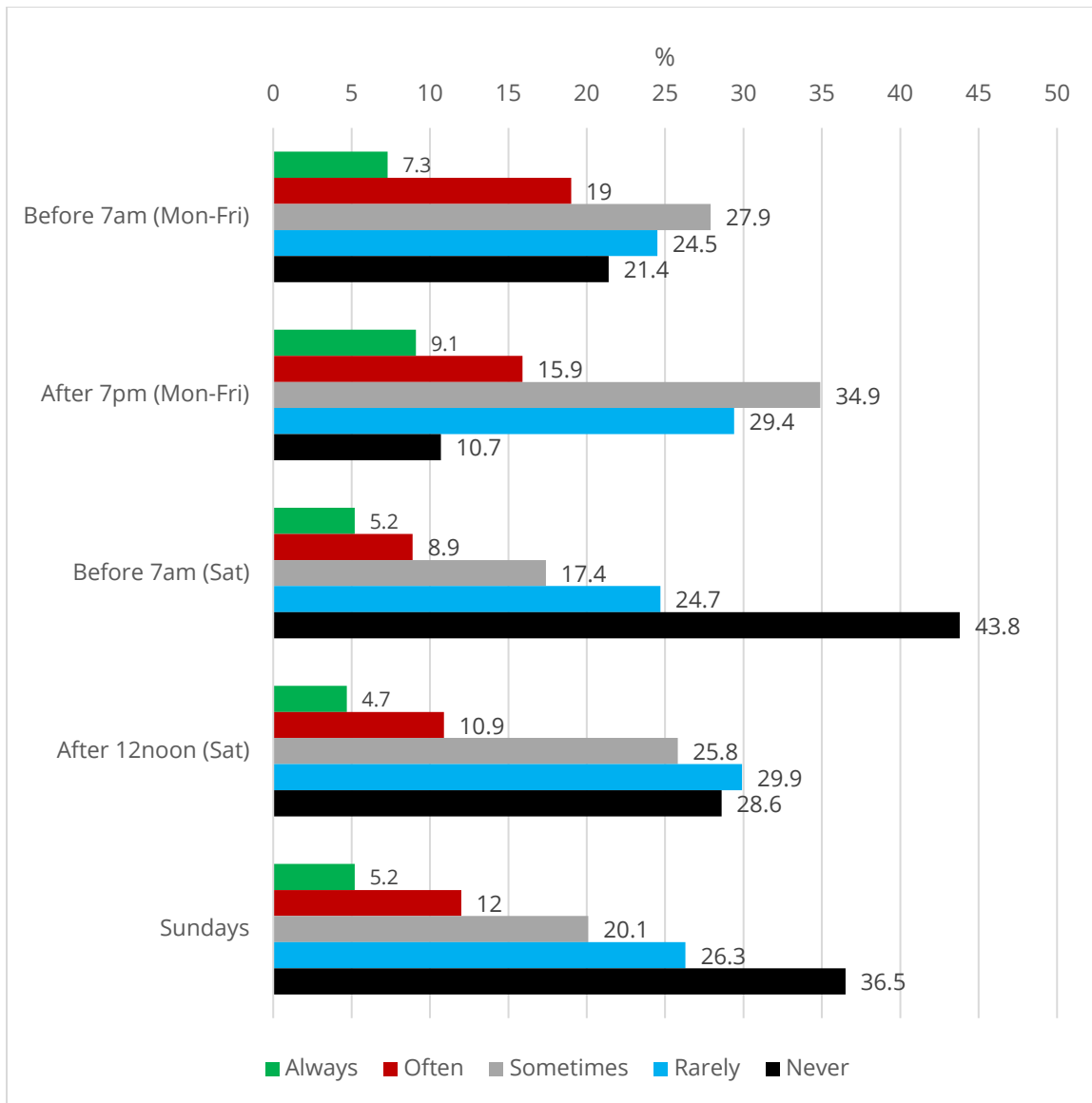


Figure 58: Work conducted outside ordinary Clerks Award hours when WFH (n=384)

A [previous study](#) (Fair Work Commission, 2021), involving n=123 businesses that employed 1712 employees covered by the Clerks Award, found that 91.8% of businesses did not have employees who changed their times of work to work between 7pm and 10pm on weekdays on a regular basis. Our current study would suggest working outside ordinary hours on weekday evenings is greater now for Clerks Award employees, with 25.0% of employees saying they work between 7pm and 10pm on weekdays either ‘always’ or ‘often’.

Similarly, in the same previous study (Fair Work Commission, 2021), n=81 out of 98 responses (82.7%) reported having no employees who changed their times of work to regularly work between 6am and 7am on weekdays. Here, 26.3% of employees were found to either ‘always’ or ‘often’ work before 7am on weekdays.

Male employees were found to be significantly more likely to work outside the Clerks Award ordinary hours than female employees, particularly after 7pm on weekdays (30.9%

versus 19.9%) and before 7am on Saturdays (18.0% versus 10.7%).

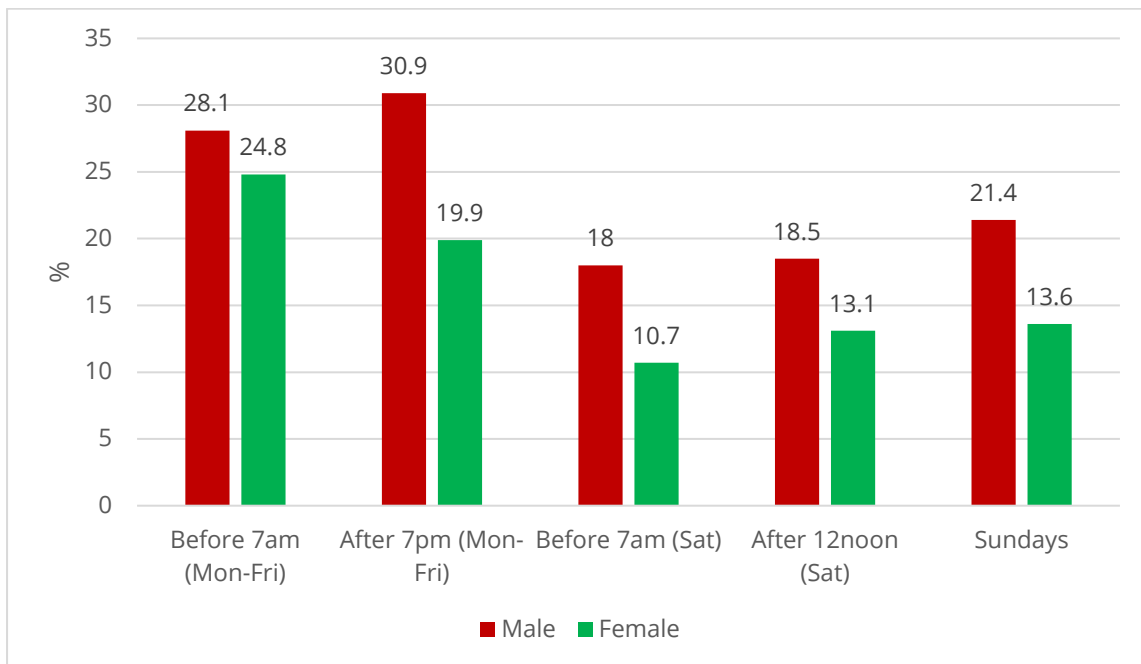


Figure 59: Work conducted outside ordinary Clerks Award hours when WFH by gender (n=384)

In terms of total hours worked, 9.4% said they 'always/often' worked longer hours when WFH, whereas 30.1% said they 'occasionally' worked longer hours when WFH.

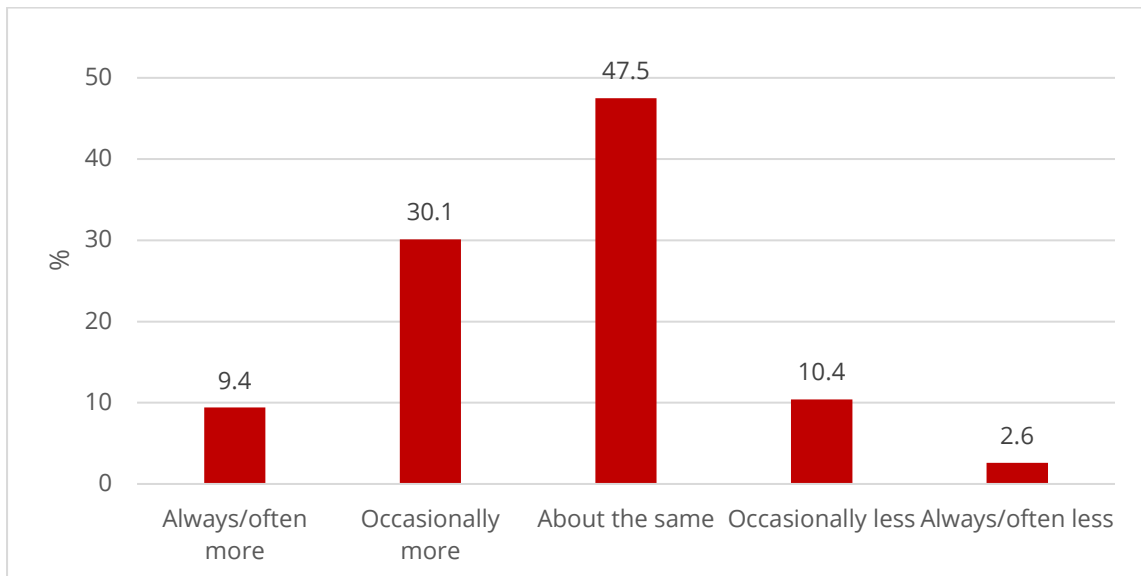


Figure 60: Frequency of working longer hours when WFH than in the office (n=531)

Almost 3 in 4 employees (73.5%) covered by the Clerks Award said they have flexibility to choose their hours of work when they WFH at least 'sometimes,' with 39.8% saying they can do this 'often' or 'always.'

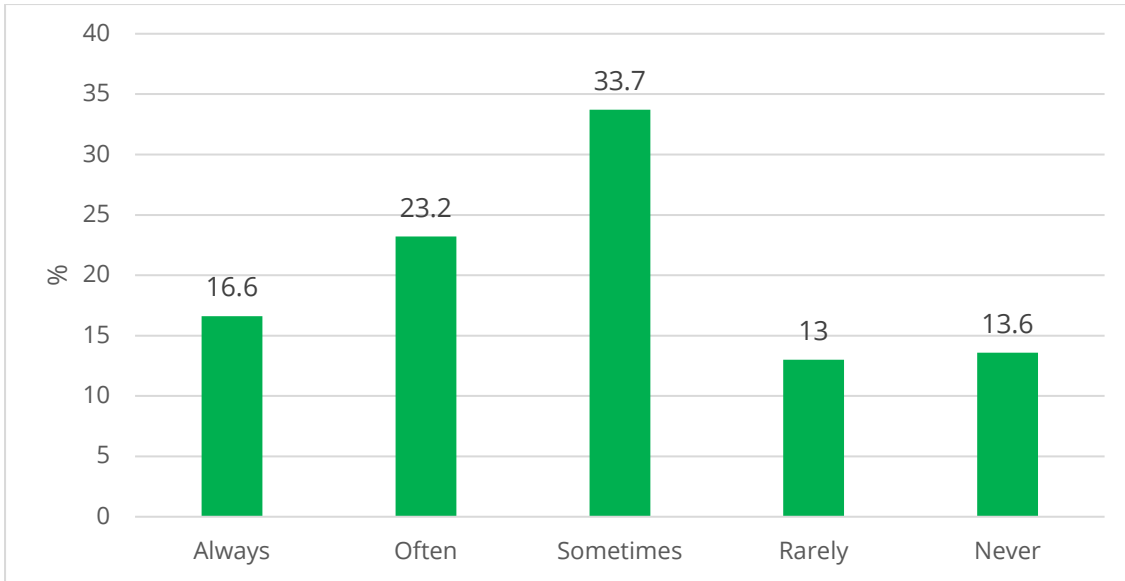


Figure 61: Flexibility to choose hours when WFH (n=531)

Participants were asked how frequently they attend to personal or non-work-related matters (excluding meal and rest breaks) during work time, both when WFH as well as when working from the workplace.

This practice was found to be more common when employees are WFH, with n=159 out of 531 employees (29.9%) found to 'always' or 'often' attend to personal matters when WFH, compared with n=163 out of 799 (20.4%) who did so when working from the workplace. Similarly, employees were more likely to 'sometimes' attend to personal or non-work-related matters when WFH (42.6% versus 36.7%).

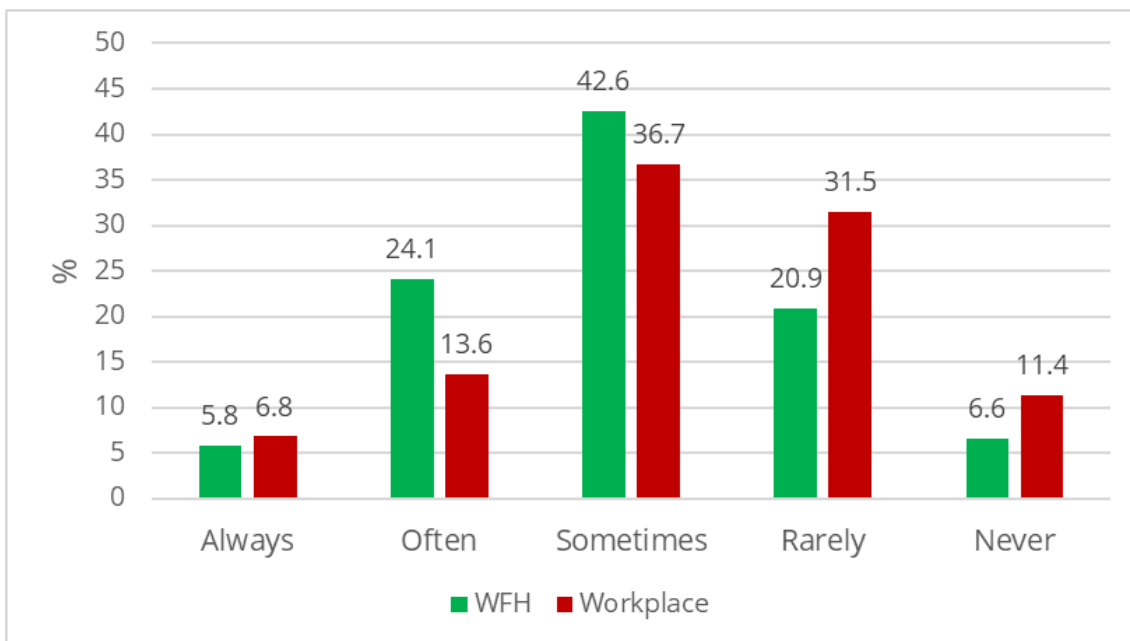


Figure 62: Frequency of attending to personal matters during work time (WFH v Workplace)

When WFH, half (50.1%) of the employees surveyed are required to log their work hours at least 'sometimes.' 56.6% said this requirement to log hours worked when WFH was different to requirements when working in workplace.

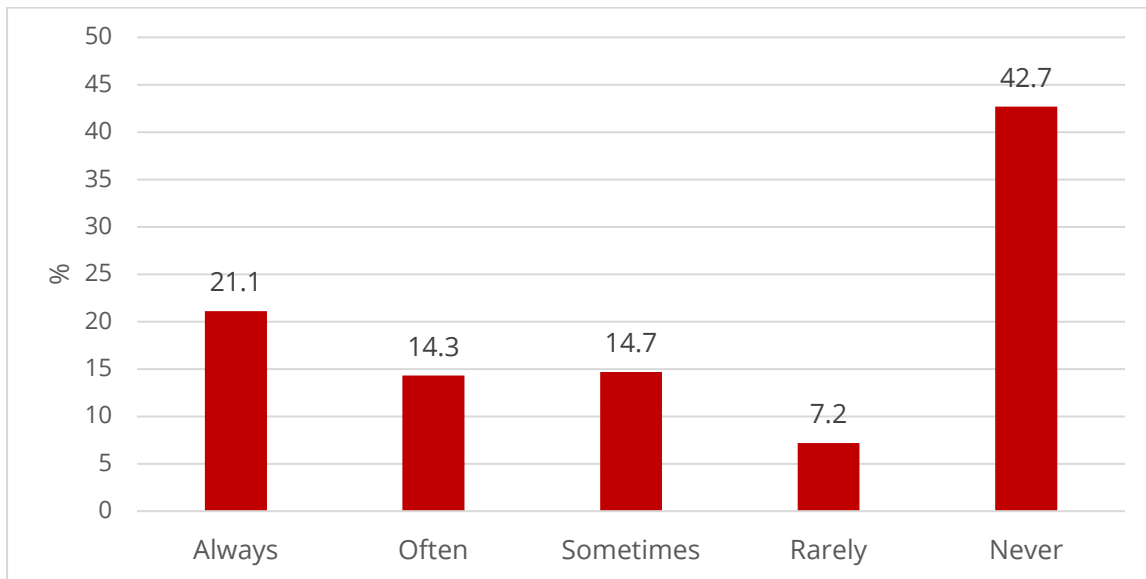


Figure 63: Requirement to log work hours when WFH (n=531)

Analysing requirements to log work hours when WFH by role type and gender, male 'Clerical' employees (35.1%) were found to be most likely to 'always' have to log their hours, whilst female 'Clerical' employees (55.1%) were found to be most likely to 'never' have to log their hours.

The sample size for 'Sales or service provider' employees was small (n=28 male; n=29 female), and would require further exploration to test for significance, but identified a very large difference between genders for those who had to 'always' log their working hours when WFH. 34.5% of female 'Sales or service provider' employees had to always log their working hours when WFH, compared with only 14.3% of male 'Sales or service provider' employees.

'Foreperson/Supervisor of other workers' were excluded from this section of the analysis due to a very small sample size (n=14 male; n=6 female).

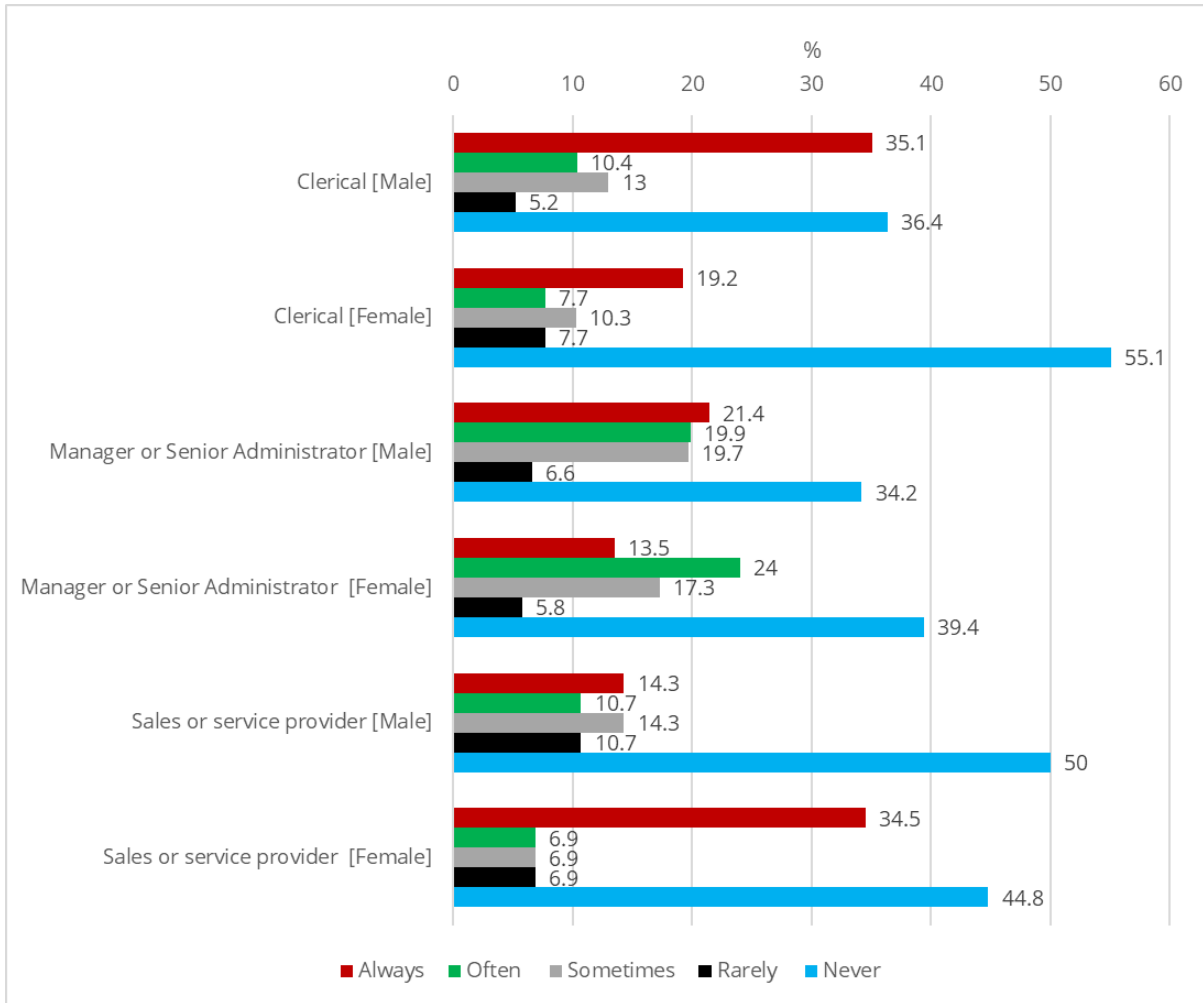


Figure 64: Requirement to log work hours when WFH by role type and gender (n=531)

3.2.7. EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK COMMENTS

Whilst the scope of this project was to collect quantitative data, the employee survey also captured a range n=490 of qualitative feedback comments from participants by asking them to share their experiences or advice on how access to WFH may be improved, in a free text box provided at the end of the employee survey.

This data was manually coded by the research team, with codes assigned to specific segments of text based on their content or meaning, to enable the identification of themes through grouping similar codes together. That process led to the identification of the key themes described below.

Flexibility and Work-Life Balance

Many comments highlighted the importance of flexibility in work schedules and the positive impact on WLB. Employees appreciated the ability to manage their personal and professional lives more effectively when they have the option to WFH.

Example quotes:

“My organisation is very flexible with WFH, it makes life easier with young children.”

"The flexibility and lack of commute that WFH allows me is extremely important to my WLB and overall happiness."

Productivity and Focus

Several comments (n=18) mentioned that WFH can enhance productivity and focus due to fewer distractions compared to the office environment. However, n=1 participant also raised also concerns about potential decreases in productivity when WFH.

Example quotes:

"WFH allows me a lot more time for work."

"Being in a controlled environment at home has allowed me to focus better on tasks without the usual office distractions."

"WFH tends to improve my productivity and efficiency."

"I think WFH decreases productivity."

Technology and Infrastructure

The need for reliable technology and infrastructure was also a recurring theme. Employees said they require reliable technology, stable internet connections, and IT support to work effectively from home.

Example quotes:

"More reliable technology support should be provided for those days of WFH."

"It's important the organisation supports the employee to WFH e.g., setting up computer, phone from home, technical support, IT support, etc."

"WFH is made easier as I've had computer equipment provided & I have a dedicated home office space."

Manager Support and Trust

Trust between management and employees was identified by n=10 participants as being crucial for successful WFH arrangements, whilst n=3 comments indicated micromanagement can hinder the effectiveness and availability of WFH.

Example quotes:

"I've successfully accessed WFH arrangements by discussing my needs with my manager."

"It is important that you feel like your employer trusts you to do the right thing, particularly when the job is clearly getting done. Not being micromanaged or monitored is important."

"Management are very reluctant to approve WFH although the immediate line managers are very supportive of it."

"HR manager assumes you aren't working and can't be trusted."

"No micromanaging bosses or management helps. They trust you to do the job, results speak for themselves."

Health and Wellbeing

WFH can positively impact mental and physical health by allowing employees to exercise, manage stress better, and avoid long commutes. However, n=1 respondent mentioned feeling disconnected from peers when WFH.

Example quotes:

"The freedom to manage my own day makes a huge difference to my wellbeing. WFH can be brought into the policy of diversity and inclusion."

"WFH has a significant positive impact on my mental health and my ability to tackle the week."

"Best working experience of my life and many less sick days."

"WFH can make you feel disconnected from peers."

Role Suitability and Equity

Employees commented that there is a need for equitable access to remote work opportunities. Some employees feel that certain roles or departments have more flexibility than others, leading to feelings of unfairness.

Example quotes:

"In my organisation, WFH availability is very dependent on your role."

"There's a bit of an unspoken rule that more senior staff get first pick on WFH days. Would be great if it felt fairer across levels."

"WFH access depends on seniority, which leads to inconsistency. I'd like to see a standard approach across the board."

Negative Perceptions

Despite the many positive benefits of WFH recognised during this study, it is also clear that a negative perception or stigma around WFH still exists amongst a minority of employees.

Example quotes:

"WFH is a joke, you go to work to work."

"The flexibility has been great, but I think there's still a bit of stigma around remote work being called less productive. That mindset needs to shift."

"I think that everyone should have returned to the office after COVID-19 lockdown ended."

"I know people at my office who WFH 'pretend to work' or will put down their time to admin and then go out for coffee or to the shops or do their gardening."

These comments and themes reflect the diverse experiences and perspectives of n=490 employees regarding their ability to WFH under the Clerks Award.

4. Conclusions



4. Conclusions

This section summarises the key findings, from both the employer and employees surveys, before making some final observations.

4.1. SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM EMPLOYER SURVEY

The aims of the employer survey were to produce insights regarding the availability of WFH policies, reasons for approval or non-approval of WFH requests, contextual reasons for why employees may not be able to WFH, how WFH affects the design and implementation of other flexible working policies, how work is managed for remote workers, and other information relevant to the Clerks Award.

Results from the employer survey indicated that WFH is widely available, with most respondents indicating that WFH is accessible for some or all clerical employees, including part-time and casual workers.

Half of employers (51%) indicated that any requests for WFH are approved. Many employers indicated that WFH requests were approved because they believed that productivity and efficiency would increase. Some employers also reported that requests were approved based on employees' personal circumstances, such as caring responsibilities.

There was consistency between the reasons WFH requests were not approved, and the contextual reasons given for why employees were required to work on site. These reasons included concerns about the impact of WFH on productivity or performance, the need to perform some work tasks in person (e.g., customer interactions), managerial preferences for in-person work, and potential disadvantages for remote workers (e.g., fewer opportunities for networking).

WFH was reported as the most common flexible work arrangement, followed by flexible start and finish times and time off in lieu. Only a minority of employers indicated that compressed work weeks and fully remote work were available.

About half of employers indicated that employees' work hours remained the same when they worked from home, with about a quarter indicating that work hours increased, with the rest indicating that work hours decreased. Almost half of employers (47.3%) indicated that employees could change their specific work hours, and most indicated that employees tended to work ordinary hours.

In terms of managing employees WFH, 35.8% of employers indicated that remote workers were required to record exact start and finish times. Employers also indicated several mechanisms for monitoring and managing work time, including the use of email and shared calendars to track employee activities, policies regarding expected absence requests, clock-in/clock-out systems, monitoring employees on instant messaging, and use of project management software.

When asked about potential changes needed to facilitate WFH among clerical employees, employers pointed to the need for suitable equipment to WFH (e.g., reliable Internet connection), establishing clear WFH policies (e.g., approval processes, employee WFH guidelines), and potential modifications to work responsibilities to expand the number of roles in which WFH is possible. Notably, none of the employer respondents indicated that the Clerks Award impedes the design or implementation of WFH practices.

4.2. SUMMARY OF INSIGHTS FROM EMPLOYEE SURVEY

The aims of the employee survey were to produce insights regarding employees' awareness of WFH policies and practices available to them in their workplace, current WFH practices, reasons why employees WFH or not, arrangements that enable WFH, barriers to WFH access and uptake, potential changes needed to facilitate WFH and other employee experiences such as WFH benefits or impact on other forms of flexibility under the Clerks Award.

Around two thirds of employees had some knowledge of the Clerks Award with around one third knowing that it applied to them. Employees in the 'Professional, scientific and technical services' sector (46%) were more than twice as likely to know that they are covered by the Clerks Award than employees working in 'Retail trade' (22%). Employees based in different locations (both metropolitan/regional and between different states and territories) also reported different awareness of the Clerks Award. For instance, workers in NSW (38%) were significantly more likely to know they are covered by the Clerks Award than employees in South Australia (31%).

Two-thirds (66%) of employees indicated having access to some level of WFH arrangements, 52% (n=419) of all employees surveyed are currently doing so, and 21% (n=171) would like to do so more often. More than half (57%) of those WFH do it for less than 40% of their total working hours, one fifth of employees (21%) do not WFH at all, whilst 16% of males are not interested in WFH compared to 11% females.

More than 3 in 5 employees who made a WFH request (n=363) had that request approved (64%), or partially approved (30%), with only 6% declined. 1 in 8 participants (13%) said they can WFH without the need for formal approval, whilst 11.1% reported having been able to WFH since COVID. It was found that 17.8% of employees have not requested WFH arrangements but would like to WFH and 13% are not interested in WFH.

Female managers/senior administrators are the employees most likely to have a WFH request declined (7.1%), whilst overall female employees (4.4%) were found to be 7.3 times more likely to have a WFH request declined than male employees (0.6%).

Employees who reported having had WFH requests declined said this was because of their employer's preference for in-office work (50%), the job role required in-person presence (50%) or because there was no capacity to change other people's work arrangements (36.4%). However, this sample size is very small (n=22) and requires more detailed investigation.

Whilst productivity concerns were a reason employers provided when declining a WFH request it was also the primary reason (38.8%) employers approved WFH requests. 33.5% of respondents indicated they worked for organisations that had policies and practices

that encourage or standardise WFH arrangements, whilst improved work engagement (29.9%), and caring responsibilities – ranging from caring for children of school age or younger (16.4%) to caring for family/household member experiencing family/domestic violence (4.3%) – were other reasons employees said WFH was supported.

39.5% of employees said they worked longer hours when WFH, compared with only 13% who said they worked fewer hours. Male employees were more likely to work outside the Clerks Award ordinary hours than female employees, particularly after 7pm on weekdays (30.9% v 19.9%) and before 7am on Saturdays (18.0% v 10.7%).

The reporting that female employees (51.5%) were more likely than male employees (39.4%) to identify ‘household management’ as a WFH benefit, underlines previous studies into the unequal burden of household work for females who WFH (Bardoel & Hopkins, 2024).

Finally, despite receiving qualitative feedback regarding equity concerns surrounding WFH arrangements, our quantitative survey data indicates neither gender nor weekly earnings impact a clerical employee’s opportunities to access WFH arrangements.

4.3. FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Consideration of the development of a specific WFH term for the Clerks Award has been initiated by the Commission with the aim of supporting employers and employees create workable arrangements for implementing remote work ([2024] FWCFB 357). Based on the results of both surveys and information gathered from employees and employers, the following observations from the Swinburne research team may have particular impact.

1. There is a group of employees under the Clerks Award who do not currently WFH but would like to. Under the Clerks Award and NES, some employees have a right to request flexible working arrangements based on eligible personal circumstances, including pregnancy, disability, carer responsibilities, and age. When employees were asked about the benefits of access to WFH, however, accommodating these circumstances were secondary to other reasons. The main benefits that employees cited were time saved (60%), productivity/performance (50%), and financial savings (48%). Likewise, the top reasons employers reported for approving WFH requests were ‘productivity/efficiency’ (42%) and ‘improved work engagement’ (32%). Despite these benefits, 18% of surveyed employees indicated that they would like to WFH but had not requested it, and 32% of employees with some access to or interest in WFH reported that they would like to WFH more often. In their qualitative comments, both employers and employees indicated that they wanted additional access to WFH.

2. Perceptions of performance affect WFH under the Clerks Award. Concerns regarding performance and productivity were the main reasons identified by employers for requests being denied. From the available data, including qualitative responses, employer and employee respondents identified the need to set clear expectations through policies, having a transparent approvals system, and having necessary equipment.

3. Employees under the Clerks Award may work additional hours when WFH. Some employers and employees claimed employees WFH were working additional hours, at

least some of the time. A quarter of employees said they 'always' (7%) or 'often' (18%) worked outside of the Clerks Award ordinary award hours, whilst a similar number of employers (21%) indicated their employees 'often' or 'always' worked before 7am Monday to Friday. While WFH, employees save time because they avoid commuting, but at least some of this time is translated into longer work hours, with 40% of employees saying they 'always/often' or 'occasionally' worked longer hours when WFH (See section 3.2.6 above). As not all employees can WFH, and those who do will have commuting times of varying length, the impact of working additional hours will likely affect different Clerks Award employees differently.

4. Certain roles under the Clerks Award are claimed to be in-person only roles. Some employers claimed that WFH requests were denied because parts of the job could not be performed remotely. However, it is unclear from the data the extent to which employers could make reasonable adjustments to such roles to enable WFH. For example, these adjustments could include greater autonomy in scheduling (Parker & Knight, 2024), such as scheduling in-person tasks to fall on a single workday, splitting in-person and location-independent responsibilities across multiple roles, or enabling job sharing.

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7. Appendices

7.1 Data Assurance

Employer survey

Octopus Group operates in accordance with ISO 20252, the international quality standard for market, opinion, and social research, which includes rigorous data protection measures. The panel provider ensures that all participant data is anonymised and that survey responses are securely stored and accessed only by authorised personnel.

reCAPTCHA scores are numerical values between 0 and 1 that indicate the likelihood of a user interaction being legitimate or a bot-driven attack. Qualtrics' reCAPTCHA tool was used to identify and block potential non-legitimate responses to the employer survey.

Employee survey

YouGov complies with ISO 27001, an internationally recognised standard for information security management systems, ensuring that data handling, storage, and transfer processes meet high security standards. Additionally, YouGov follows GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) guidelines for data privacy and protection.

"Speeders" are survey participants who complete the survey significantly much faster than the average completion, potentially indicating they are not reading the questions properly or providing thoughtful responses, and n=16 speeders were removed from the Employee Survey due to the fact they had completed the survey in under one-third of the median completion time.

Both OctopusGroup and YouGov have robust cybersecurity measures in place, including data encryption, access controls, and regular security audits, to mitigate risks and ensure compliance with Australian Privacy Laws.

7.2 Statistical Testing

When comparisons are made between categories (e.g., gender differences etc.), we assess the significance of any observed differences using the chi-square (χ^2) test of independence. We describe differences as significant if they are associated with a p-value of less than .05.

For example, to investigate whether gender has an impact on the WFH arrangements of employees, we conducted the chi-square test of independence. This was found to be significant, $\chi^2(6) = 22.561$, $p < .05$, indicating differences between male employees and female employees. Inspection of the standardised residuals indicated that female employees were significantly more likely than male employees to have a WFH request denied.

7.3 Key differences between this study and 2021 Fair Work Commission Clerks study

In 2020, the Commission oversaw a survey of members of the Australian Industry Group (Ai Group) and Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) on WFH practices under the Clerks Award (the '2021 Clerks study') (Fair Work Commission, 2021). The Commission was interested in whether employers were using the terms of Schedule I of the Clerks Award, which had been added to the Award during the COVID-19 pandemic to provide employers more flexibility in making WFH arrangements ([see \[2020\] FWCFB 5199](#)).

While both the 2021 Clerks study and this study surveyed Australian employers with employees covered by the Clerks Award, differences in design and methodology limit the comparability of their findings:

First, the studies sampled from different populations. The 2021 Clerks study sampled from members of the Ai Group and ACCI, and this study sampled from panel members of an ISO-accredited research organisation, the Octopus Group.

Second, the 2021 Clerks study excluded respondents that had enterprise agreements with employees who would otherwise be subject to the Clerks Award; however, the current study did not screen out these respondents in the employer survey.

Third, the sample size in the 2021 Clerks study is smaller (n=123) than the sample size in the current study (n=384).

Fourth, the composition of respondents by business size differed. Large businesses (200+ employees) are more represented in the current study, accounting for 26.8% of respondents. In the 2021 Clerks study, only 11.4% of respondents were large businesses. The distribution of medium-sized businesses (20-199 employees) and small businesses (1-19 employees) also differed: In the 2021 Clerks study, 56.1% of respondents were medium-sized businesses, and 22.5% were small businesses, whereas in the current study 46.9% of respondents were medium-sized businesses and 26.3% were small businesses. For an additional comparison, according to the Commission's data profile of employees on the Clerks Award, 24.2% of these employees work for large businesses, 21.6% work for medium-sized businesses, and 54.2% work for small businesses.

Finally, different wording in the survey questions also limits comparability.

A copy of both survey instruments is available via the following [link](#).



Recommended citation:

Hopkins, JL; Solly, S; Bednall, T; Tomassetti, J; & Kyndt, E (2025), 'Clerks – Working from Home Surveys,' *Swinburne University of Technology*.