



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

APS workforce research

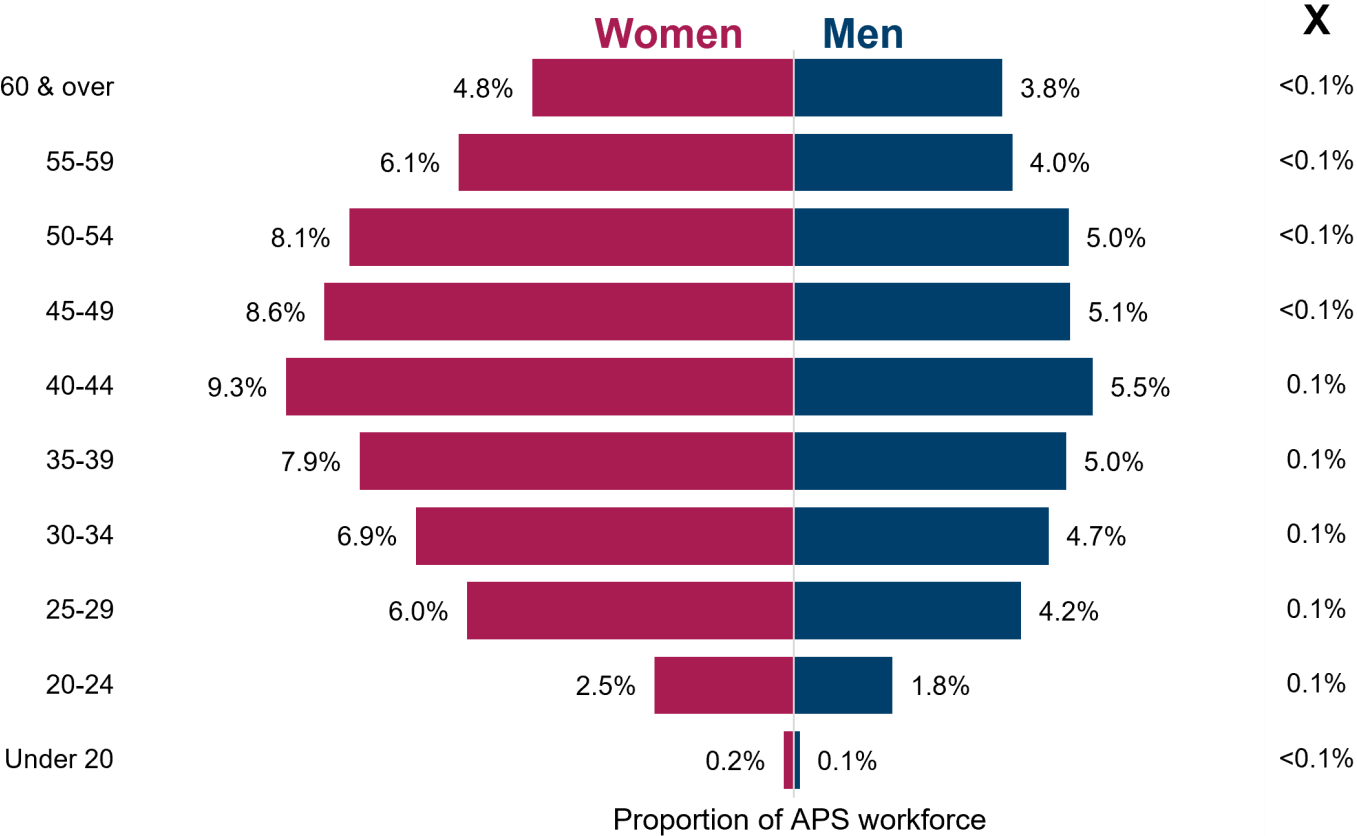
Age and gender of APS employees

People Insights Branch

Research Note 08-26



Women comprise a larger proportion of the Australian Public Service workforce than men or those with other gender identities



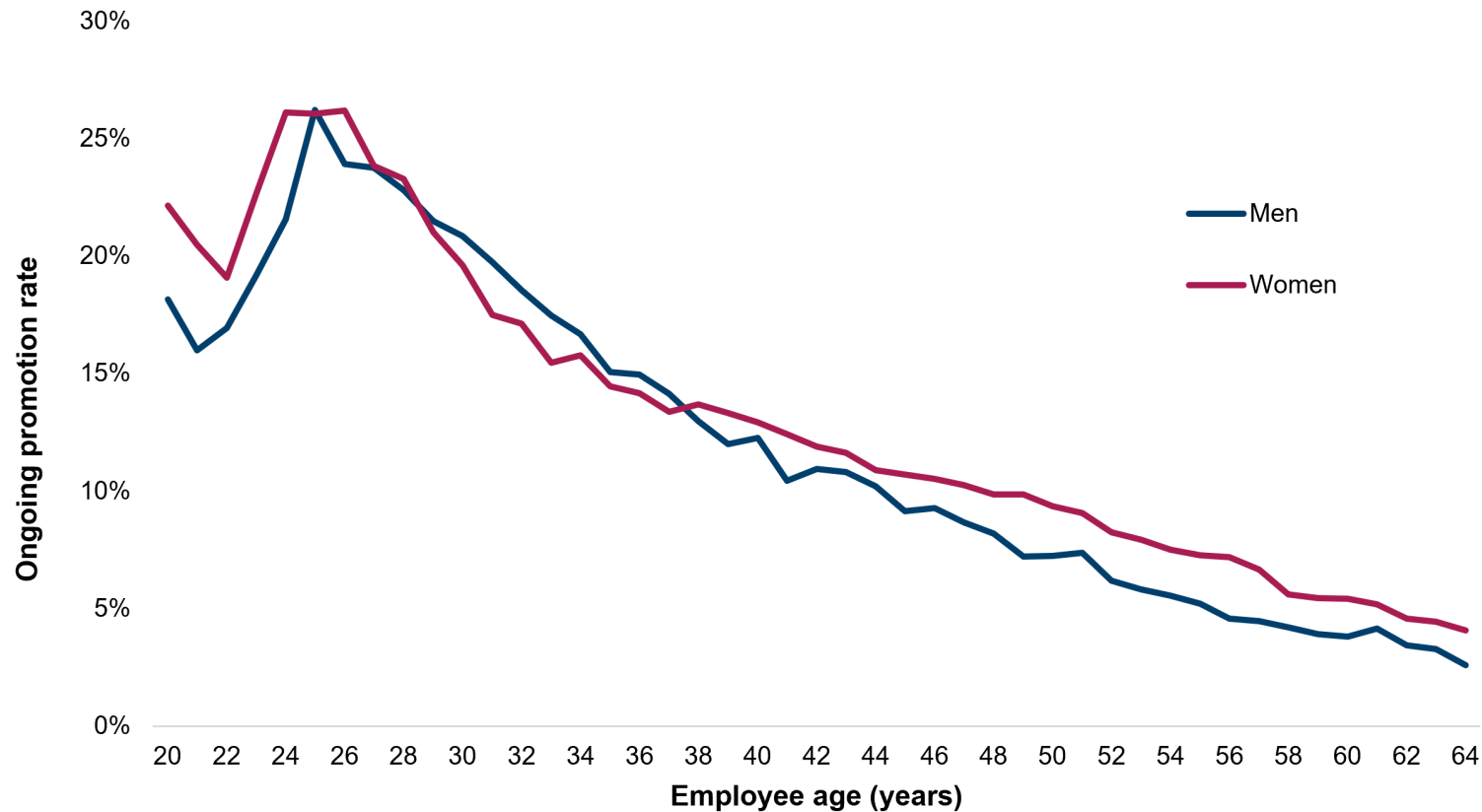
Women outnumber men at all age groups across the APS.

This gap is most pronounced in the mid-life age brackets.

Over one quarter of the APS is made up of women aged between 40 and 54 years of age.

Source: APS Employment Database, 31 December 2025. All employees (Ongoing and non-ongoing).

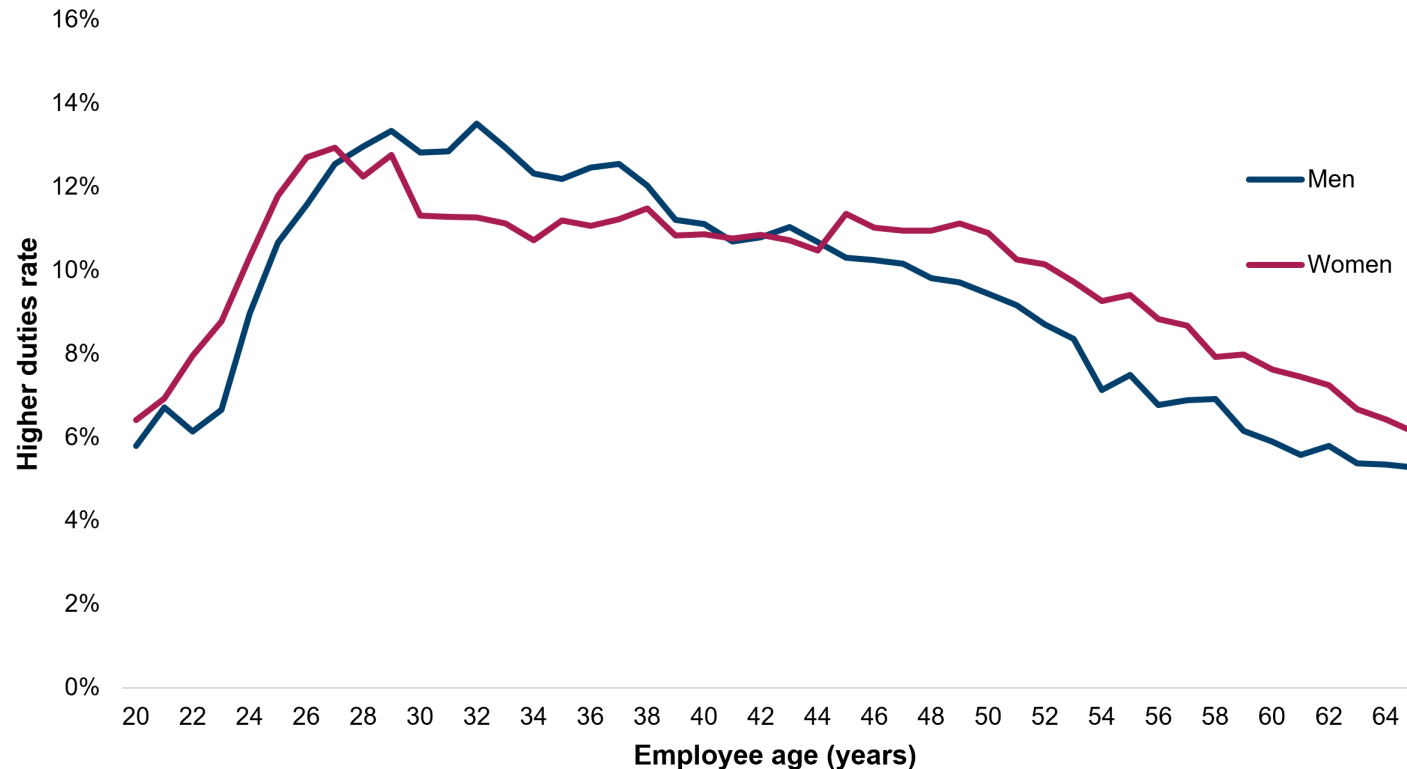
Women tend to have higher promotion rates than men, except for those aged in their early thirties



Women in their early thirties had slightly lower promotion rates than men.

This reversed in the late thirties, after which promotion rates remained higher for women than for men.

The proportion of men and women acting in higher duties positions declined with age, but showed a similar crossover trend

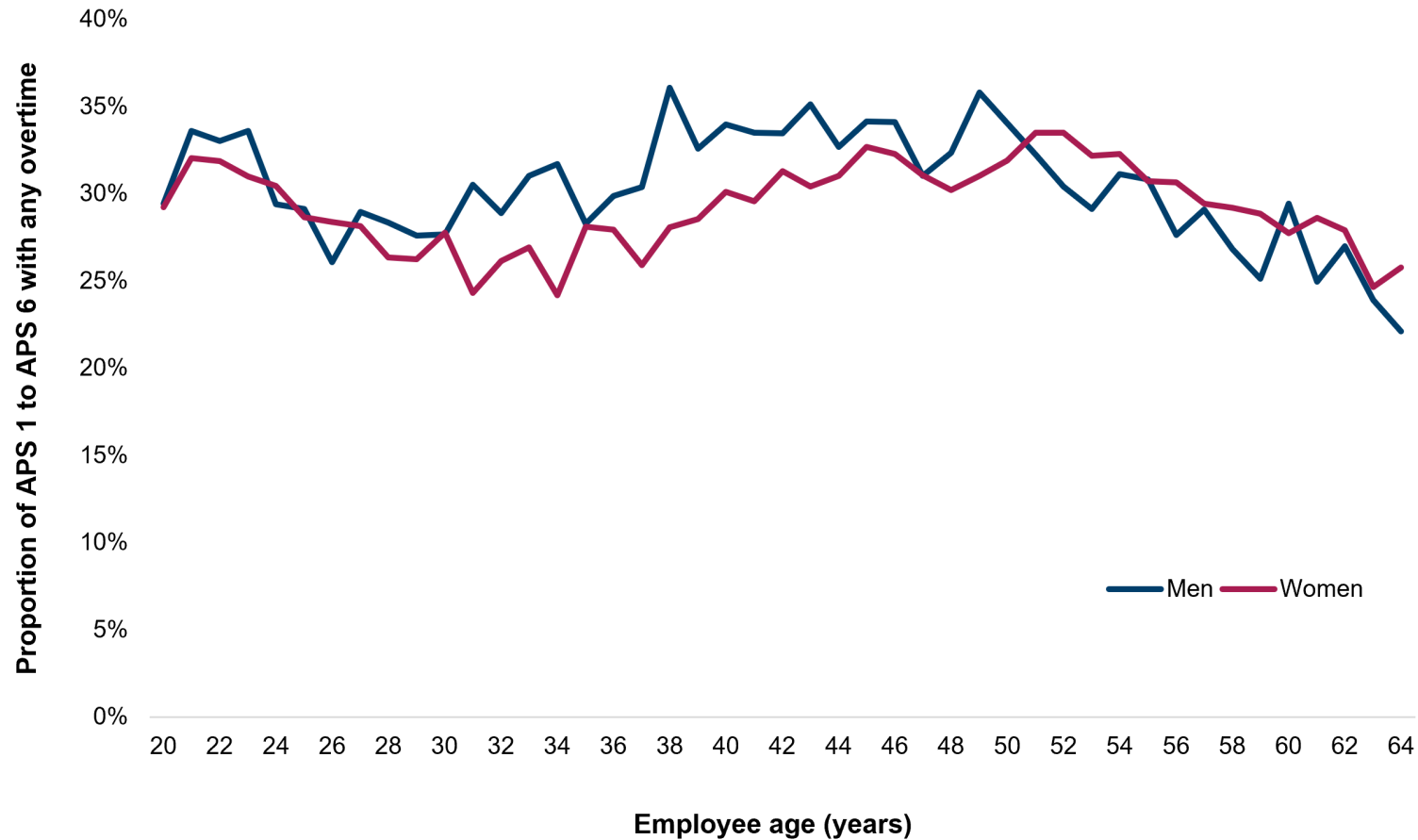


For those aged in their late twenties through to those aged in their late thirties, a greater proportion of men than women acted in a position with a higher paid classification level.

From the mid-forties, this pattern reversed and women tended to have higher rates of acting in higher duties roles.

While the proportion of men acting at higher duties declined for those older than 30 years, women's acting rates remained relatively steady for those in their forties and fifties, only declining for those older than 50 years.

The proportion of men and women undertaking any overtime remained relatively stable until the age of 50 years, where these rates started to decline

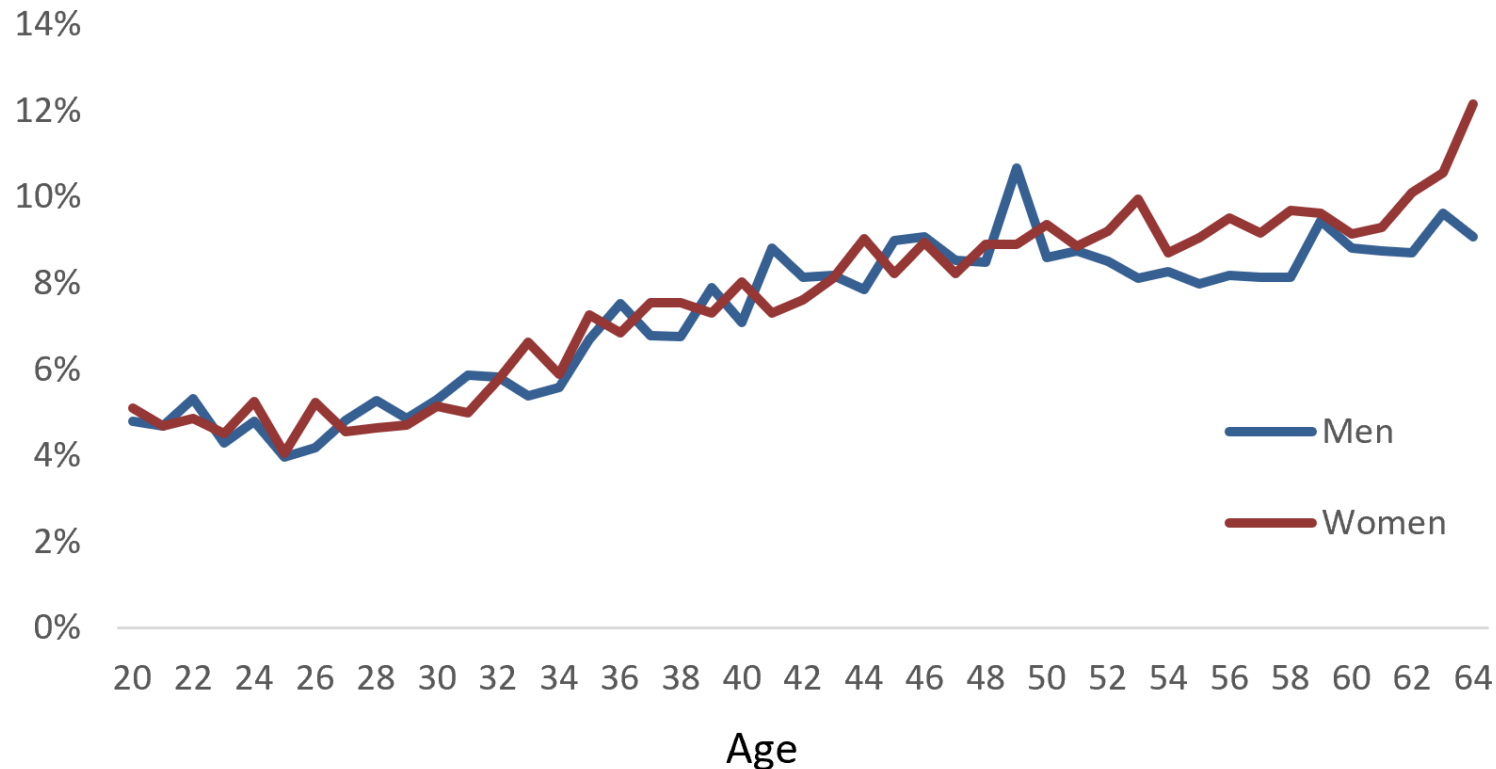


The proportion of employees in APS 1 to APS 6 classifications undertaking any paid overtime declined for both men and women from around 50 years in age.

Men aged in their thirties had slightly higher overtime rates than women. This trend ended in the fifties when rates become similar for men and women.

As a proportion of their base salaries, men and women aged 50 years and older earned greater amounts of overtime than their younger counterparts

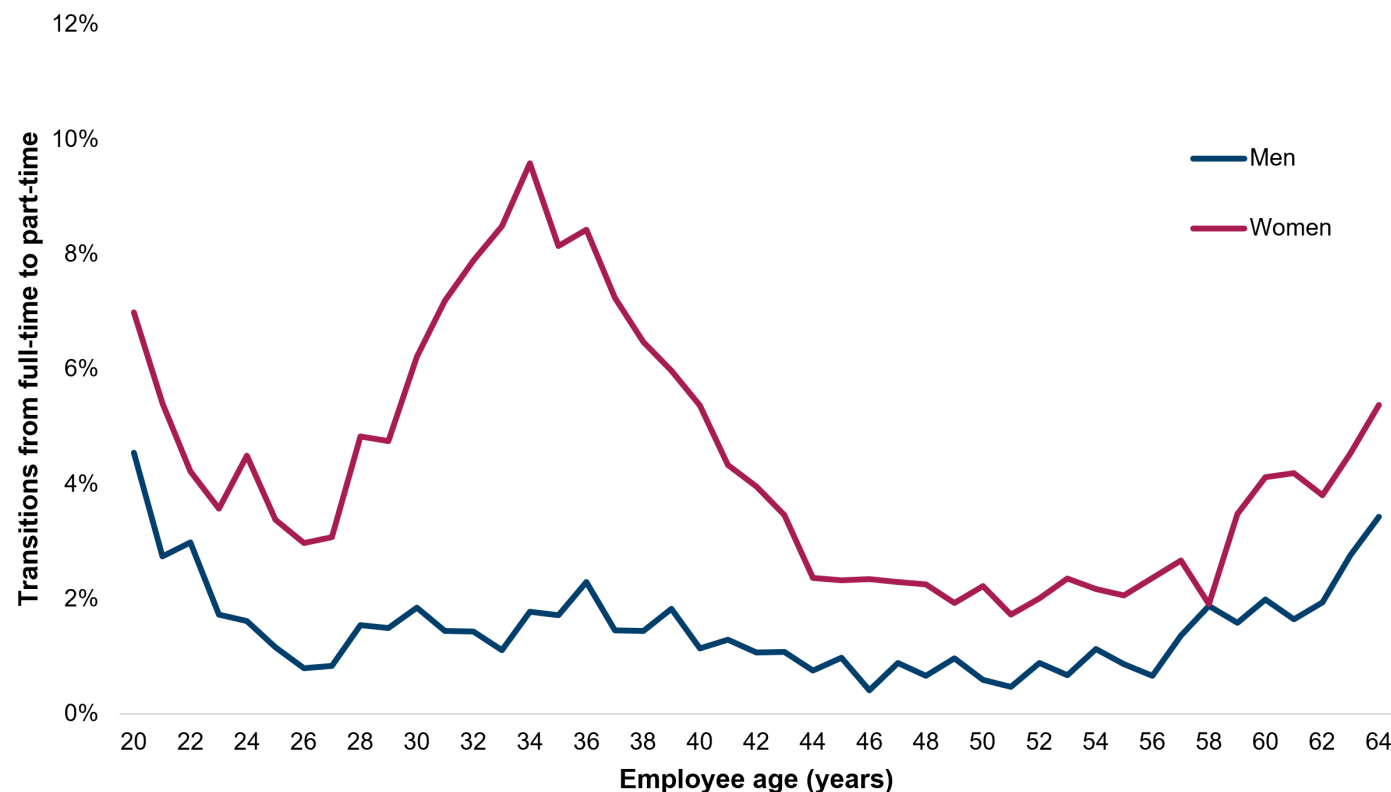
Earned overtime as proportion of Base Salary



As a proportion of base salary, amounts of paid overtime increased with age from around 5% for employees aged in their twenties up to around 9% for employees aged in their mid-forties.

For those aged in their fifties and sixties, women have a generally higher proportion of earned overtime than men.

When compared to men, far greater proportions of women aged in their thirties transitioned from full-time to part-time work

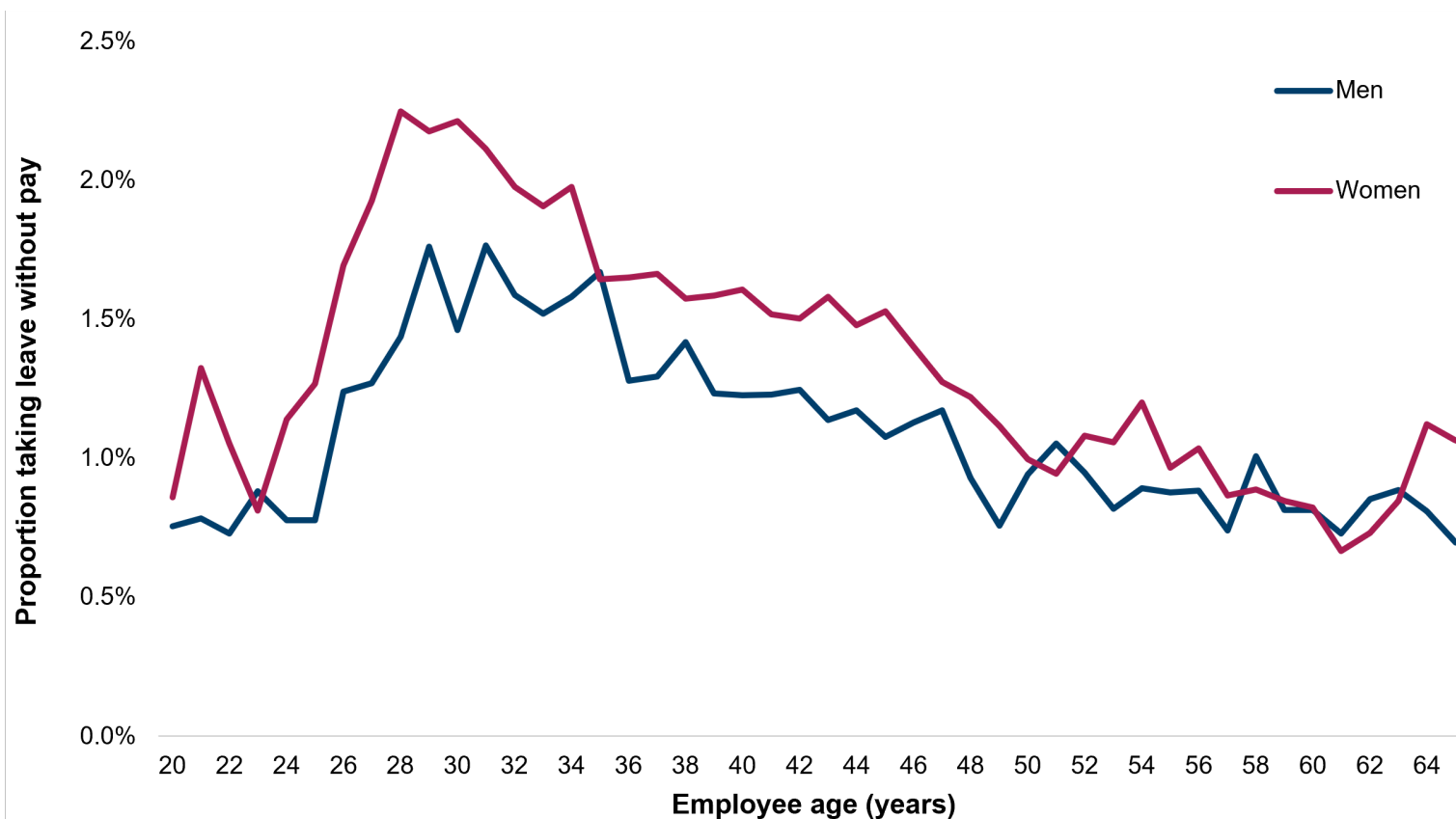


The proportion of women who transitioned from full-time to part-time work remained higher across all age groups when compared to men.

Women aged in their mid-thirties had the largest proportion who had transitioned to part-time work. This aligns with the period of greatest child caring responsibilities.

Rates for both men and women rose in the years approaching retirement.

Men and women aged in their late twenties to early thirties had the highest rates of leave without pay

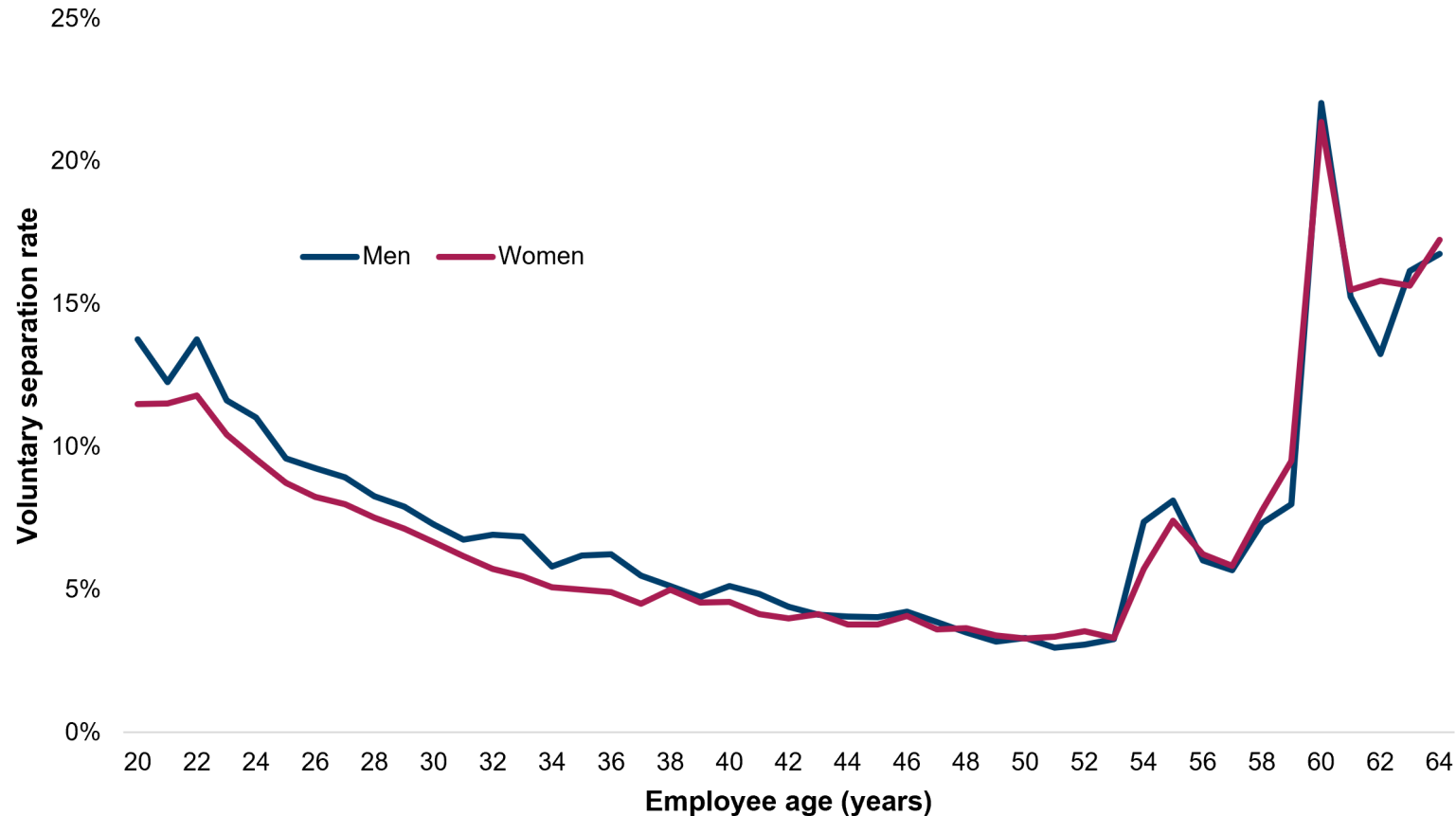


Rates of leave without pay (LWOP) peaked for those aged in their late twenties and early thirties for both men and women. This likely represents LWOP paired with periods of parental leave.

Long-term unpaid leave declined over the career span for both men and women. An exception is the uptick for women aged in their mid-sixties. This likely reflects pre-retirement leave redemption.

Larger proportions of women than men took LWOP before the age of 50. After which, men and women had similar rates.

After steady declines, the proportion of both men and women voluntarily separating from the APS increased dramatically for those aged in their early fifties

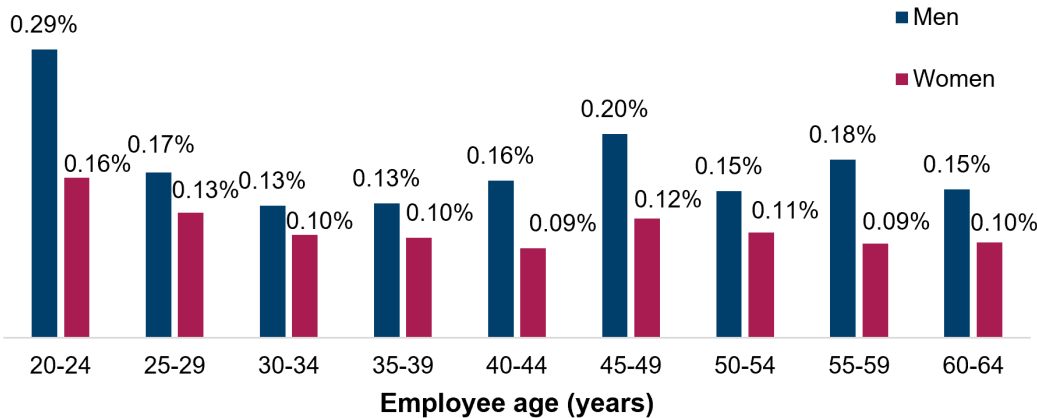


Men and women and similar voluntary separation rates.

The proportion voluntarily separating from the APS declined with age until the mid-fifties. The large rise in voluntary separations at this age is consistent with the '54 11' Commonwealth pension milestone. A higher peak is seen for those aged 60 years.

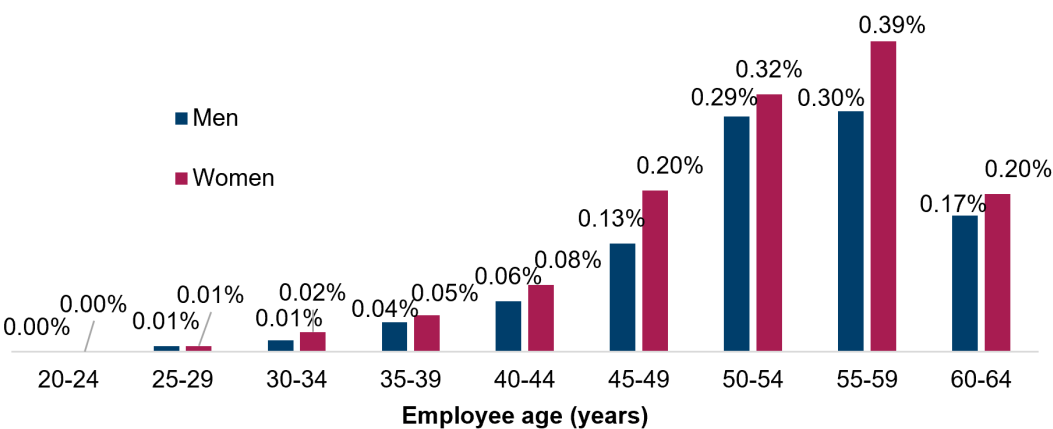
Terminations of appointments are very rare. Termination due to physical and mental incapacity are rarer still, though trend higher for older women

Termination of appointment rates



Terminations of APS appointment occur rarely (346 in total in 2025) relative to the overall size of the APS population. Rates trend higher for men, particularly for men in their early twenties.

Rates of termination on grounds of physical or mental incapacity



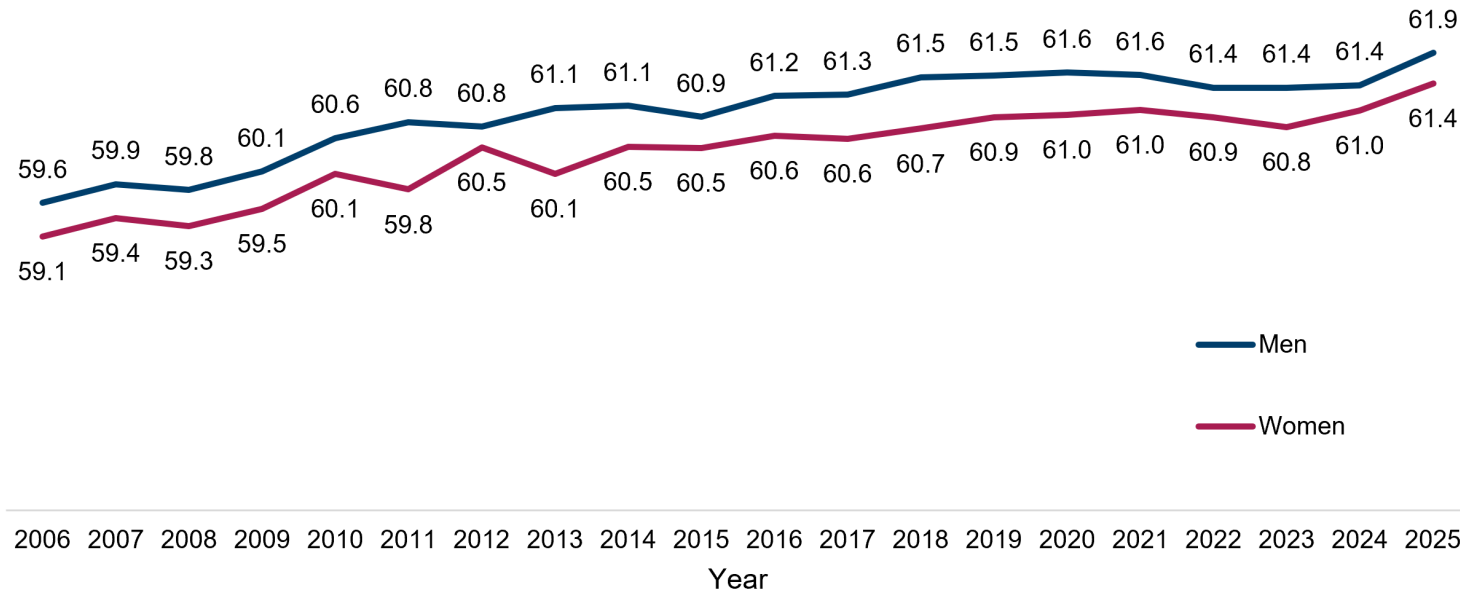
Terminations on the grounds of physical or mental incapacity per the *Public Service Act 1999* (s29) are relatively rare, equating to just over 1 per 1,000 employees per year (209 in total in 2025).

Rates trend higher for women, particularly for those aged in their late fifties.

Source: Ongoing separations – physical or mental incapacity and termination of appointment by average headcount.
APS Employment Database 2021-2025 calendar years.

Average age of retirement has progressively increased over time, with men consistently retiring around six months later than women

Average (mean) age of retirement



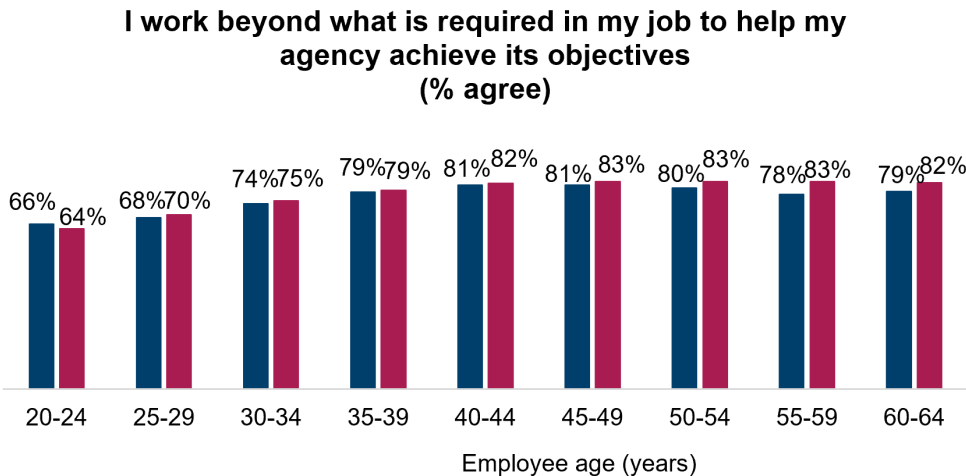
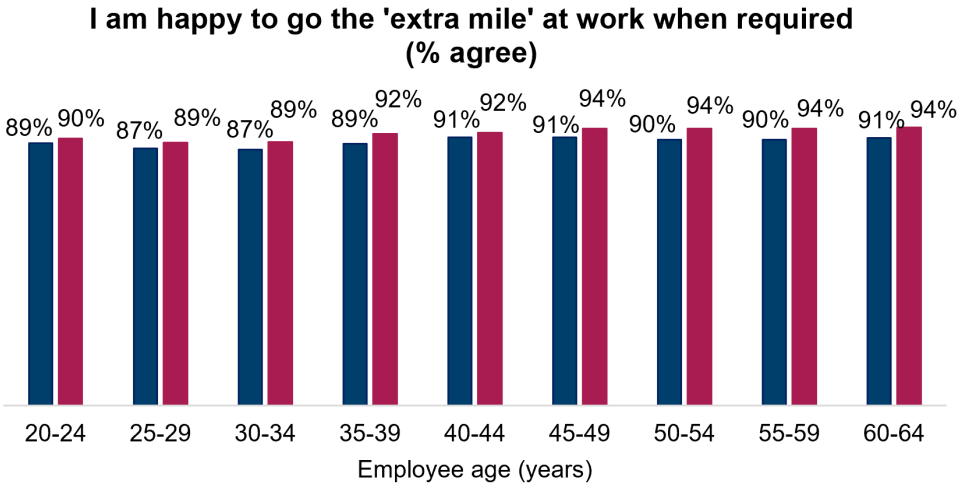
Since 2006, the average retirement age has risen by 2.3 years for both men and women.

The six-month gap in average retirement age for men and women in the APS is smaller than the 1.1-year retirement gender gap seen in the wider Australian population in 2024-25.

Similar proportions of men and women indicated a willingness to devote discretionary effort in performing their APS role

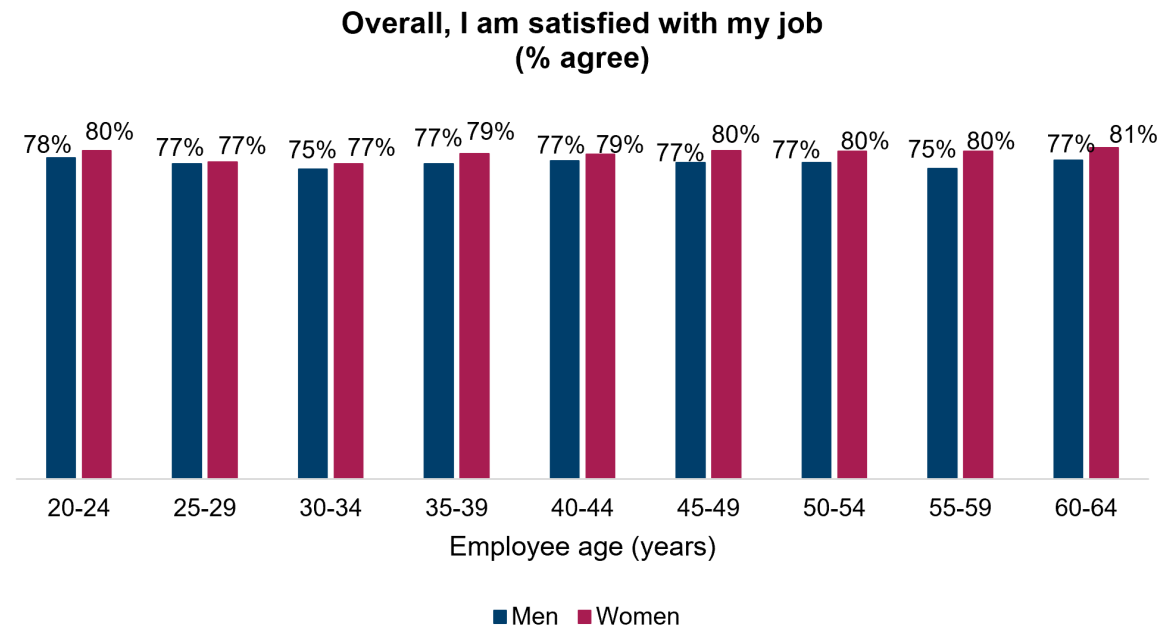
In general, men and women of all ages said they were happy to go the 'extra mile' at work when required.

Employees aged 35 and older showed slightly higher agreement with the statement that they work beyond what is required in their job to help their agency achieve its objectives.



Large proportions of men and women of all age groups expressed job satisfaction

While job satisfaction was consistently high across gender and age groups, a slightly larger proportion of women said they were satisfied with their job, compared to men.



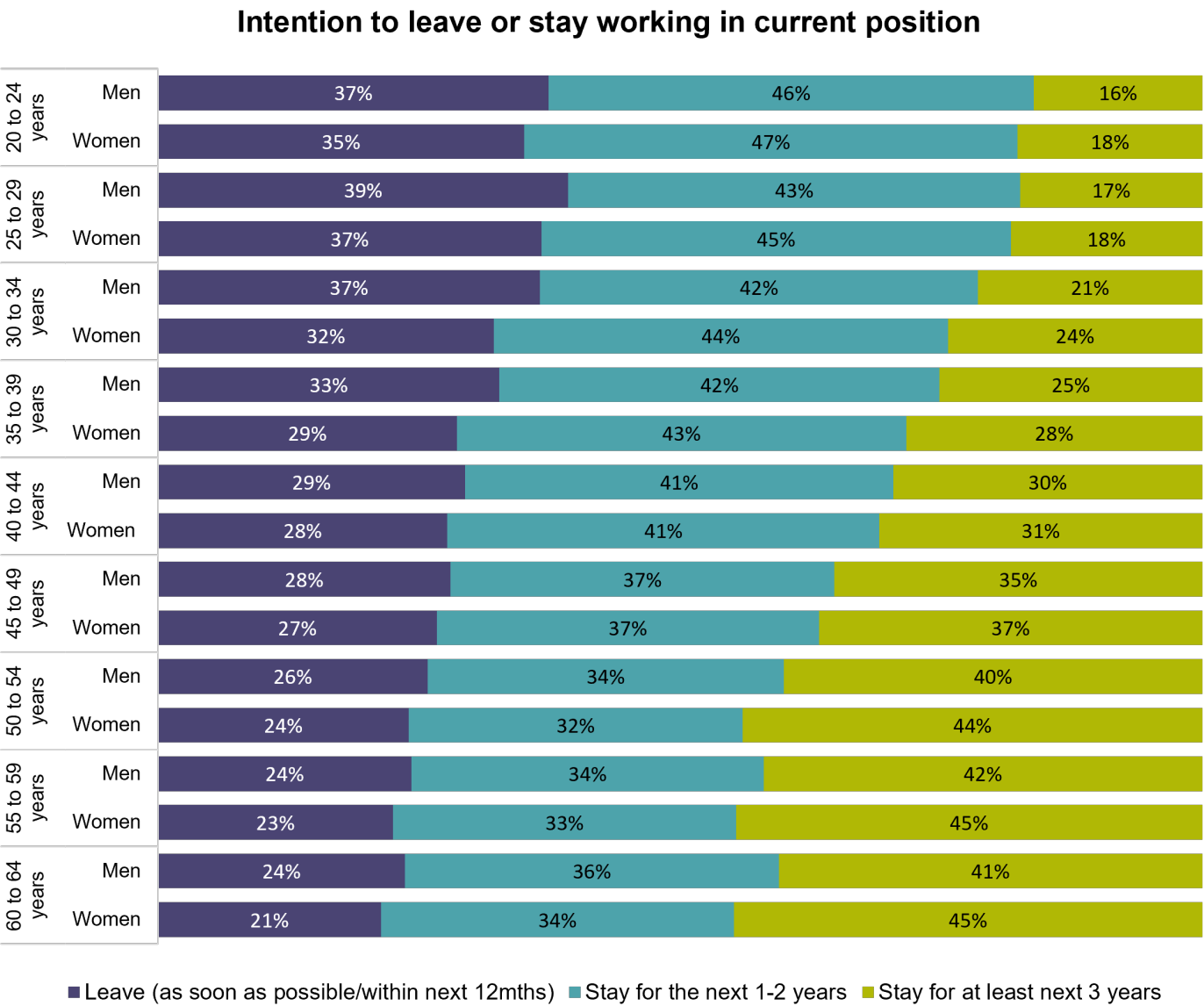
Source: 2025 APS Employee Census. APS employees.

Among both men and women, turnover intention is lowest among older age groups

The proportion expressing an intention to leave their current position tended to decrease with age.

Older employees showed greater intentions to stay working in their current position for at least the next three years.

Across all age groups, women consistently indicated a slightly lower intention to leave their position, compared to men.

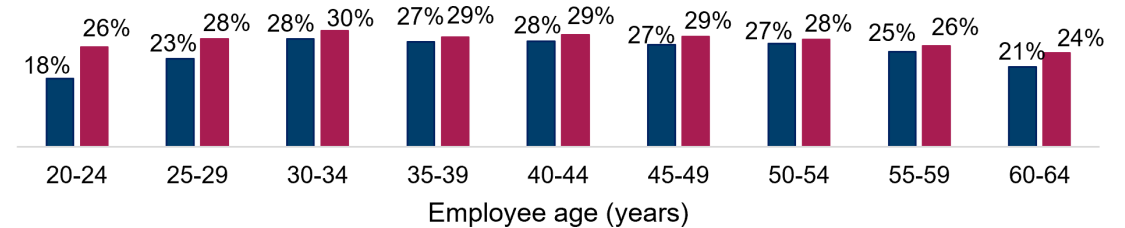


Men and women between the ages of 30 and 59 years reported similar perceptions of work stress and emotional demands

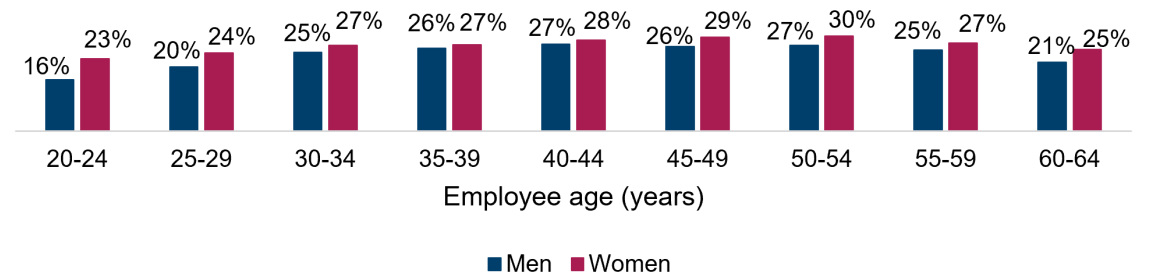
Overall, perceptions of stress and emotional demands at work were similar for men and women across most age groups.

When compared to men, however, larger proportions of women younger than 30 years and older than 60 years reported perceptions of work stress and emotional demands.

To what extent do you find your work stressful? (% always or often)



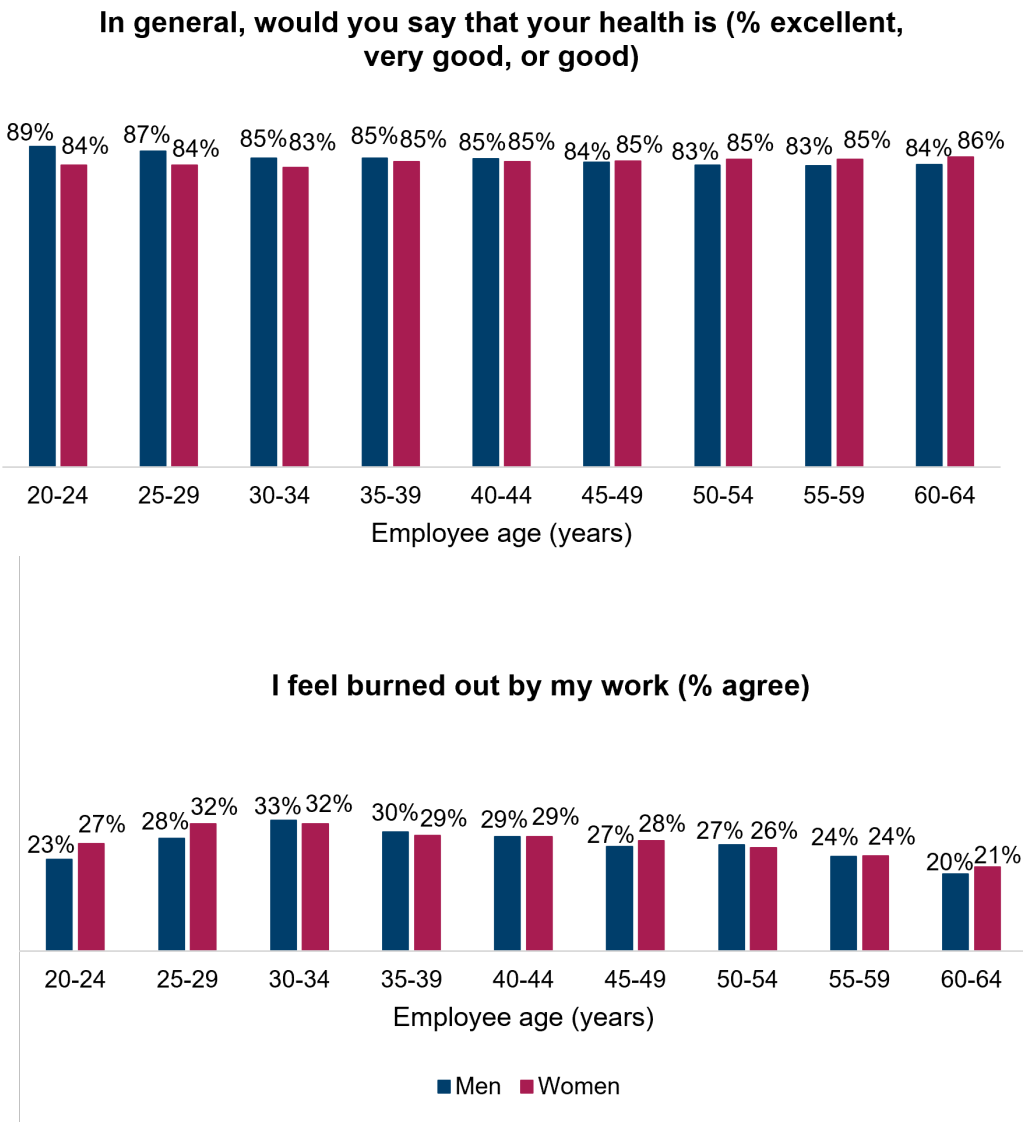
To what extent is your work emotionally demanding? (% to a very large or large extent)



Perceptions of general health are consistent across age groups, whereas burnout is not

Perceptions of general health were consistent across age and gender, with most employees reporting good to excellent health.

For both men and women, older employees and those aged 20-24 years tended to feel less burnt out by their work.

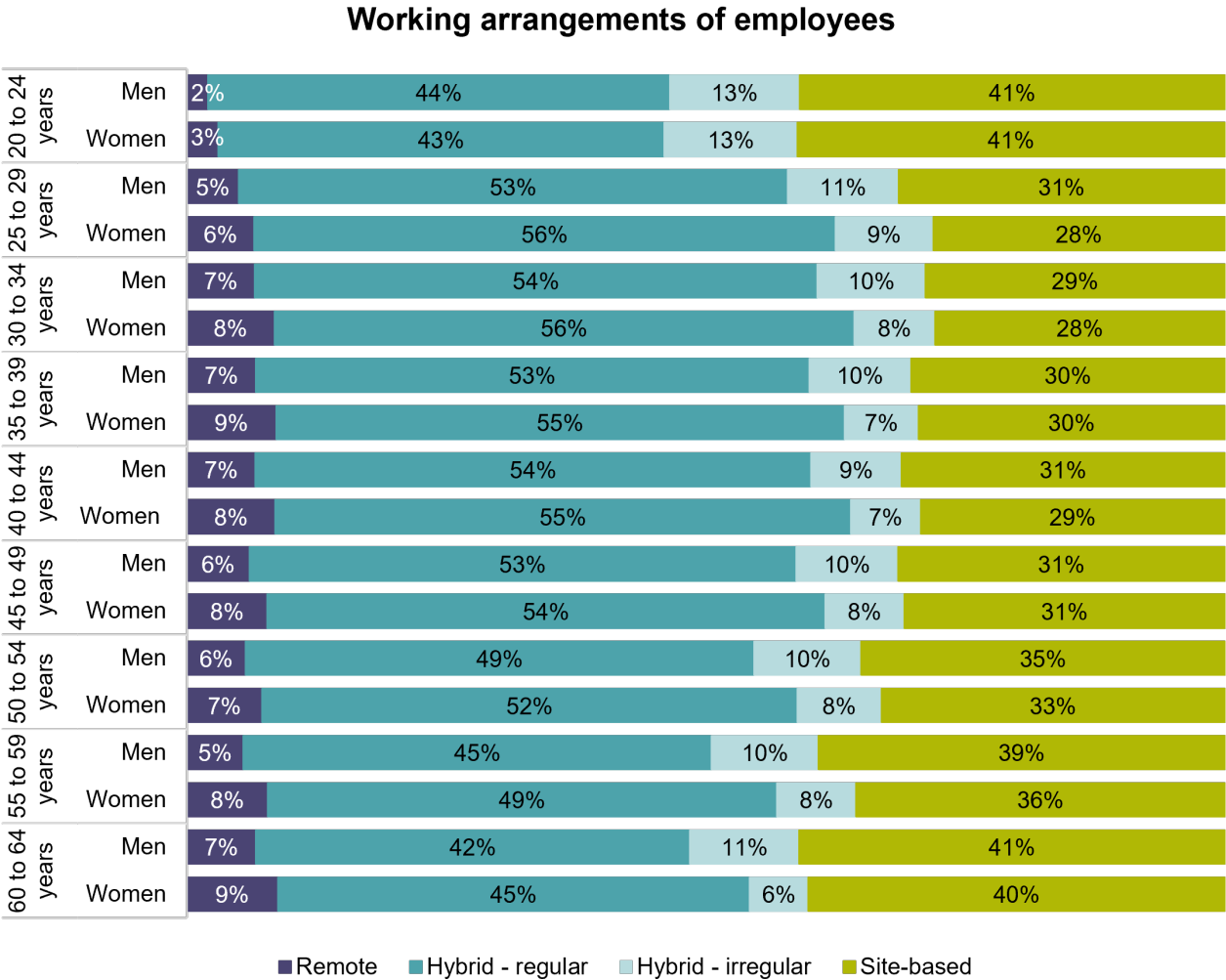


Uptake of working from home arrangements tended to vary depending on employee age and gender

Regardless of age and gender, most employees worked from home to some extent.

Working from home arrangements tended to be more common among younger employees.

Older cohorts and early career employees aged 20 to 24 years had a lower uptake of working from home arrangements. Larger proportions engaged in site-based work.



Source: 2025 APS Employee Census. APS employees.

Summary

- Women between 40 and 54 years of age make up over one quarter of the APS.
- The proportion of employees obtaining promotions and higher duties declined with age. In later life, larger proportions of women than men obtained both.
- Separation rates decline with age and are very similar for men and women. Rates then increase approaching retirement age.
- Though exceedingly rare, terminations on the basis of physical and mental incapacity were more common for women than men.
- The retirement age has risen over time. Men and women have a six-month gap in average retirement age.
- Willingness to put in discretionary effort at work and job satisfaction are consistently high across age and gender.
- The uptake of work from home is common amongst men and women of all ages.



Further information

Should you require further information, please contact the
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