# SAGE Cygnet Award Application

**FLEXIBLE WORK**

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

| Name of Institution | Western Sydney University |
|---|---|
| Date of Application | 30 June 2023 |
| Application Prepared By | Dr Kieryn McKay, SAGE Project Coordinator |
| Contact for Application | Professor Janice Aldrich-Wright, SAGE Academic Lead |
| Email | j.aldrich-wright@westernsydney.edu.au |
| Telephone No. | 02 4620 3218 |

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

With respect for Aboriginal cultural protocol and out of recognition that its campuses occupy their traditional lands, Western Sydney University acknowledges the Darug, Eora, Dharawal (also referred to as Tharawal) and Wiradjuri peoples and thanks them for their support of its work in their lands across Greater Western Sydney and beyond.



### Image Details.

*Those Who Came Before* Us, 2021. Western Sydney University collaborative artwork.

Created by staff, students and community, under the cultural guidance of Allan McKenzie of Wiradjuri and Gamilaroi nations. On site for view in Chancellery foyer, Western Sydney University, Parramatta South Campus.

# CONTENTS

# LIST OF TABLES

# LIST OF FIGURES

# GLOSSARY

## Institutional acronyms and abbreviations.

| Acronym/Abbrev. | Full Title |
|---|---|
| CALD | Culturally and Linguistically Diverse |
| Cultural Leave | Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Leave and Personal or Sick Leave accessed for Cultural Reasons |
| DFV | Domestic and Family Violence |
| DVC-A | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) |
| DVC-IL | Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Indigenous Leadership) |
| DVC-REI | Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise & International) |
| EAL/D | English as an Additional Language or Dialect |
| ED | Executive Director |
| EDWP | Equity and Diversity Working Party |
| EPN | Engaged Parents Network |
| FG | Focus Group |
| Flex Leave | Working Flexible Hours Scheme (Flex Leave) |
| FW | Flexible Work |
| FW-SWAG | Flexible Work SAGE Working Aggregate Group (SAT Subgroup) |
| *GE Policy* | *Gender Equality Policy* |
| *GE-Strategy* | *Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan, 2021 – 2026* |
| GEDI | Gender equity, diversity and inclusion |
| HIE | Hawkesbury Institute for the Environment |
| ICS | Institute for Culture and Society |
| Indigenous | Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander |
| KPA | Key Priority Area |
| LGBTIQ+ | Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer |
| MARCS | MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development |
| NICM | National Institute for Complementary Medicine |
| NSW | New South Wales |
| OEDW | Office of Equity, Diversity and Wellbeing |
| OP/OHR | Office of People (formerly Office of Human Resources) |
| PC-SWAG | Parents & Carers SAGE Working Aggregate Group (SAT Subgroup) |
| RW-Pilot | Remote Work Pilot (est. 2020) |
| SAGE-AL | SAGE Academic Lead |
| SAGE-DAL | SAGE Deputy Academic Lead |
| SAGE-PC | SAGE Project Coordinator |

| | |
|---|---|
| SAGE-SAT | SAGE Self-Assessment Team |
| SoB | School of Business |
| SCDMS | School of Computer, Data and Mathematical Sciences |
| SDVC | Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost |
| SoE | School of Education |
| SEDBE | School of Engineering, Design and Built Environment |
| SHCA | School of Humanities and Communication Arts |
| SHS | School of Health Sciences |
| SoL | School of Law |
| SoM | School of Medicine |
| SoNM | School of Nursing and Midwifery |
| SoP | School of Psychology |
| SoSc | School of Science |
| SSS | School of Social Sciences |
| SWAG | SAGE Working Aggregate Group (SAT Subgroup) |
| THRI | Translational Health Research Institute |
| VC | Vice-Chancellor and President |
| VC-GEC | Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Committee |
| VC-GEF | Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund |
| WfHA | Work from Home Agreement (formal) |
| WSU | Western Sydney University |
| Yammer | Western Sydney University Yammer Network (enterprise communication system) |

# WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY: SAGE CYGNET #

| | ✔<br>Current Cygnet | **Barrier**<br>· List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet<br>· List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted |
|---|---|---|
| [Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier | ✔ | Flexible Work |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

# KEY BARRIER

## What is the Key Barrier addressed in this Cygnet?

Flexible Work (FW) is an essential tool for increasing engagement, satisfaction and retention among WSU's diverse staff cohort. However, Bronze Award analysis evidenced:

- Low awareness of FW options;
- Low perception that FW is encouraged;
- Some concern that FW is not equally accessible for all genders;
- Low male parent uptake of FW options;
- Lower comparative FW satisfaction for Indigenous staff.

# EVIDENCE OF BARRIER

## How did you know this was a barrier to attraction, retention and/or progression?

During the Bronze Award era (2015–2018), an array of FW options was available for staff balancing work and personal priorities. FW was an embedded strategic goal in WSU's *Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan, 2015–2020* (*GE-SAP*), included among *GE-Policy* Manager/Supervisor KPIs, outlined in *Enterprise Agreements,* and affirmed in *Workplace Flexibility Policy*.

Nonetheless, FW was identified as a key barrier by internal benchmarking analysis generated through substantial staff engagement (Table 1). *MyVoice* surveys captured high-level experience data, a *Flexible Work and Family Responsibilities (FWFR)* survey delivered targeted FW prompts, and a Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund (VC-GEF) *Parental Leave* project assessed FW experiences by parent status, gender and employment type (Table 2).

*Table 1. Flexible Work Benchmark Surveys, Interviews & Focus Groups, 2015 - 2018*

| Benchmark Flexible Work Surveys, Interviews & Focus Groups, 2015 – 2018 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Engagement | | Purpose | Respondents | |
| Year | Title | Focus | RR | *n* |
| Broad Organisational Surveys with FW Content | | | | |
| 2015 | *MyVoice* Culture Survey | Review ongoing/fixed-term staff workplace experiences & perceptions | 85% | 2,270 |
| 2018 | *MyVoice* Culture Survey | Review ongoing/fixed-term staff workplace experiences & perceptions | 87% | 2,254 |
| 2018 | *MyVoice* Focus Groups | Investigate ongoing/fixed-term staff workplace experiences & perceptions | - | 121 |
| FW-Focused Surveys & Interviews | | | | |
| 2017 | Flexible Work & Family Responsibilities (FWFR) Survey | Review all staff experiences of FW culture and practice | 26% | 615 |
| 2018 | *Parental Leave* (*PL*) Survey | Explore recent Parental Leave takers (> 5yrs) experience of FW culture and practice (VC-GEF Project, Aldrich-Wright *et al*., 2018) | 46% | 139 |
| 2018 | *Parental Leave* Interviews | Investigate recent Parental Leave takers (>5yrs) experience of FW culture and practice (VC-GEF Project, Smith *et al.*, 2018) | - | 10 |

*Table 2. Respondent Diversity for Flexible Work Benchmark Surveys, 2015 - 2018*

| Staff Diversity in Benchmark Surveys, 2020 – 2022 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Number of Responses (*n*) by Cohort | | | | | | |
| Year | Title | WSU | F | M | X | Prof | Aca | Parent | Indigenous |
| Broad Organisational Surveys with FW Content | | | | | | | | | |
| 2015 | *MyVoice* Culture Survey | 2,270 | 1,266 | 804 | n/a | 1,237 | 728 | 955 | 53 |
| 2018 | *MyVoice* Culture Survey | 2,254 | 1,275 | 750 | 45 | 1,428 | 826 | 935 | 81 |
| FW-Focused Surveys | | | | | | | | | |
| 2017 | Flexible Work & Family Responsibilities (FWFR) Survey | 615 | 428 | 166 | n/a | 434 | 181 | n/a | n/a |
| 2018 | *Parental Leave (PL)* Survey | 139 | 98 | 38 | >5 | 90 | 49 | 139 | >5 |
| Notes: MyVoice 2015 and FWFR survey did not disaggregate data for staff identifying as genders other than woman or man (X); FWFR survey did not enquire about parent status or Indigenous identity; PL survey data for gender diverse and Indigenous staff were below minimum reporting thresholds (>5). | | | | | | | | | |

## Flexible Work Uptake

During 2015–2018, most FW arrangements were negotiated between individual staff and supervisors. As such, formal FW data was limited to relevant leave uptake, which indicated active engagement with WSU's Flexible Hours of Work Scheme (82% professionals accessing), Long Service Leave (12% all-staff accessing) and Cultural Leave (5% all-staff accessing).

VC-GEF research provided indicative data for the uptake of FW arrangements by WSU parents. Female, professional, and academic parents reported high uptake for remote work, flexible start/finish times, and Phased Return to Work (Table 3). Academic parents demonstrated highest likelihood and greatest frequency for working from home, while professionals had lowest remote work uptake (Table 4).

**Barrier 1: Low Male Parent Uptake.** 62% of male parents reported having no FW arrangements in place (Table 3).

*Table 3. Parent Cohorts Reported Flexible Work Uptake, Parental Leave Survey, 2018*

| Parents Uptake of Flexible Work Options, 2018 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reported Uptake by Parent Cohort | | | | |
| FW Arrangement | WSU (n=139) | F (n=98) | M (n=38) | Prof (n=90) | Aca (n=49) |
| Phased Return to Work | 52% | 69% | n/a | 62% | 33% |
| Part-time work / reduced hours | 26% | 34% | 0% | 22% | 31% |
| Job Share | 5% | 6% | 0% | 7% | 0% |
| Work from home | 42% | 45% | 32% | 26% | 74% |
| Flexible start/finish times | 46% | 53% | 26% | 43% | 52% |
| Compressed Working Week | 8% | 8% | 10% | 5% | 14% |
| PAL | 3% | 4% | 0% | 4% | 2% |
| Other | 5% | 5% | 3% | 6% | 2% |
| No FW arrangement | 25% | 12% | 62% | 21% | 27% |

*Table 4. Parent Cohorts Reported Work from Home Trends, Parental Leave Survey, 2018*

| Parents Work from Home Trends, 2018 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Reported Uptake by Cohort | | | | |
| Work from home frequency | WSU *(n=139)* | F *(n=98)* | M *(n=38)* | Prof *(n=90)* | Aca *(n=49)* |
| More often than 1 day per week | 11% | 11% | 13% | 0% | 33% |
| 1 day per week | 15% | 17% | 6% | 12% | 19% |
| Less often than 1 day per week | 15% | 17% | 13% | 14% | 21% |
| Never | 58% | 55% | 68% | 74% | 26% |

# Flexible Work Experiences

Broad *MyVoice* surveys repeated at three-year intervals showed steady satisfaction (±5%) with Flexibility and Work/Life Balance, with no trends by gender (Figure 1) or parent status (Figure 3). Differentiations by employment type for Work/Life Balance satisfaction correlated to Workload prompts, requiring review outside the scope of this Cygnet (Figure 2). Disaggregation by Indigenous identity revealed important divergences (Figure 4).

**Barrier 2: Relative Dissatisfaction for Indigenous Staff.** Indigenous staff reported consistently and significantly lower satisfaction with Flexibility and declining positivity for Work/Life Balance.

FW-focused surveys (Figure 5 & Figure 6) confirmed broad satisfaction, including positive experiences of supervisor support and belief that workplace flexibility is meeting individual needs, especially for parents. Challenges were identified around information and awareness, encouragement, and gender-equitable access.

**Barrier 3: Unfamiliarity and Doubts About Encouragement.** Only 37% of staff reported receiving FW information and just 54% of parents reported familiarity with FW options. Academics, male parents and academic parents rated lowest for familiarity, suggesting that pro-flexibility messaging was not reaching important audiences. Staff were only moderately convinced that "FW is actively encouraged", with male and academic parents in least agreement.

**Barrier 4: Perceived Gender Inequity.** Concerns arose regarding gender-equitability, with just 62% of all-staff and 52% of parents agreeing that "FW options are equally available at WSU, regardless of gender". Male and academic parents scored particularly low for these prompts. Concerns appear to bear out in lived experience, with male parents less positive than female counterparts across all prompts, including supervisor support.

**Barrier 5: Insufficient Intersectional Analysis.** Carers for persons other than dependent children were not consistently defined, making trend comparisons infeasible. No analysis was performed by CALD status or disability.
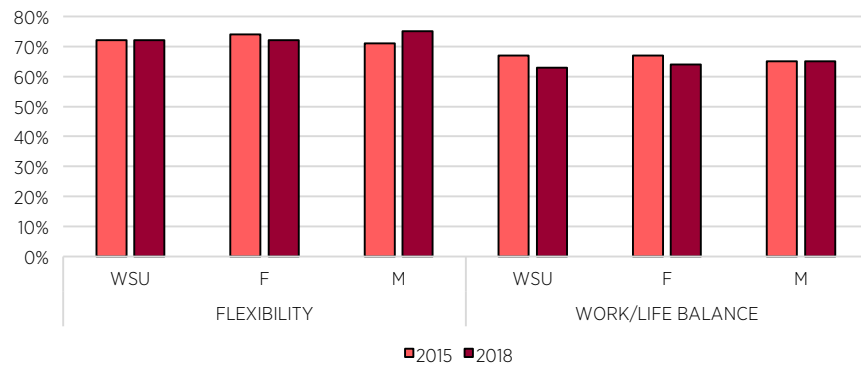
*Figure 1. Top-Level Category Positivity by Gender, MyVoice, 2015 & 2018.*

<u>Key Findings:</u> *no consistent, significant (≥5%) trends are visible within top-level Flexibility or Work/Life Balance categories by gender or across years.*
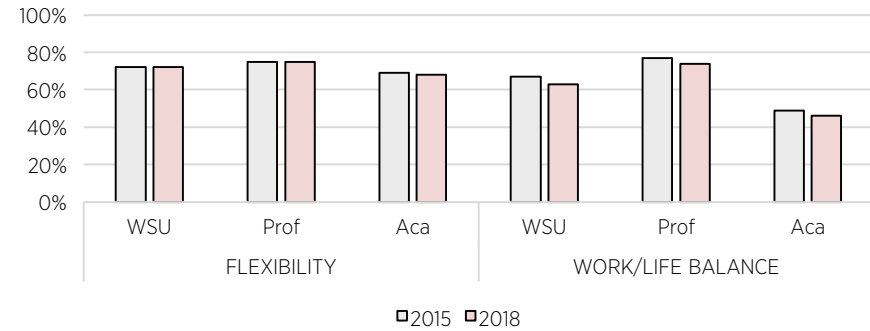


*Figure 2. Top-Level Category Positivity by Employment Type, MyVoice, 2015 & 2018.*

<u>Key Findings:</u> *across top-level categories, academics scored mildly lower than professionals for flexibility (-6%), but significantly lower for work/life balance (-28%). Results were lowest for Levels B–D and correlate with similar differentiations in Workload prompts, requiring review beyond Flexible Work considerations.*
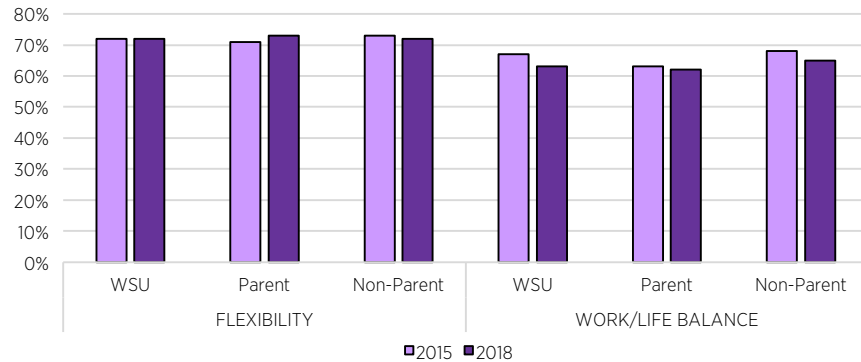


*Figure 3. Top-Level Category Positivity by Parent Status, MyVoice, 2015 & 2018.*

<u>Key Findings:</u> *no consistent, significant (≥5%) trends by parent status (dependent children) within top-level categories or across years.*
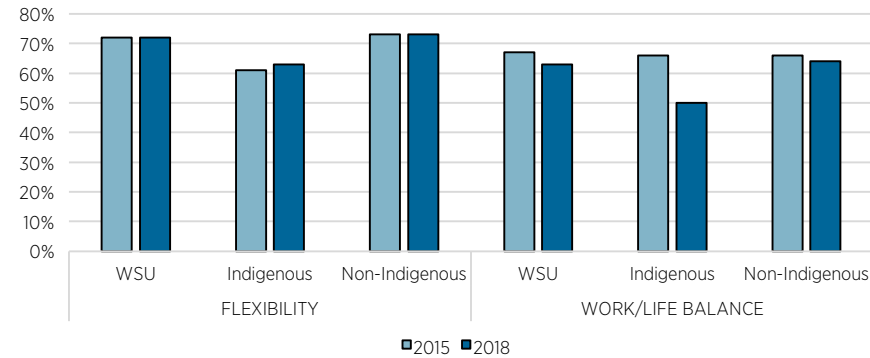


*Figure 4. Top-Level Category Positivity by Indigenous Identity, MyVoice, 2015 & 2018.*

<u>Key Findings:</u> *Indigenous staff are consistently less positive about Flexibility than non-Indigenous staff (-12% in 2015 and -10% in 2018) and showed declining positivity about Work/Life Balance (-16% in 2018, compared with 2015). Patterns are not explained by Workload category prompts, which evidence much smaller differentiations.*
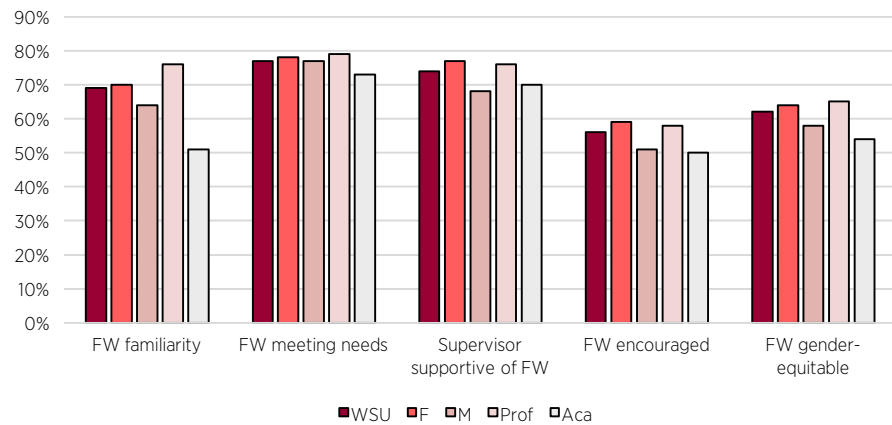
*Figure 5. WSU Staff Positivity for FW Prompts by Gender and Employment Type, FWFR Survey, 2017.*

*Key Findings: Staff reported broad satisfaction with supervisor support (74%) and belief that individual needs are being met (77%), with no significant differentiations by gender or employment type. However, staff were unconvinced that "FW is actively encouraged" (56%), and academics were much less familiar with FW options than professional staff (-25%). Staff were only in moderate agreement (62%) that "FW options are equally available at WSU, regardless of gender".*
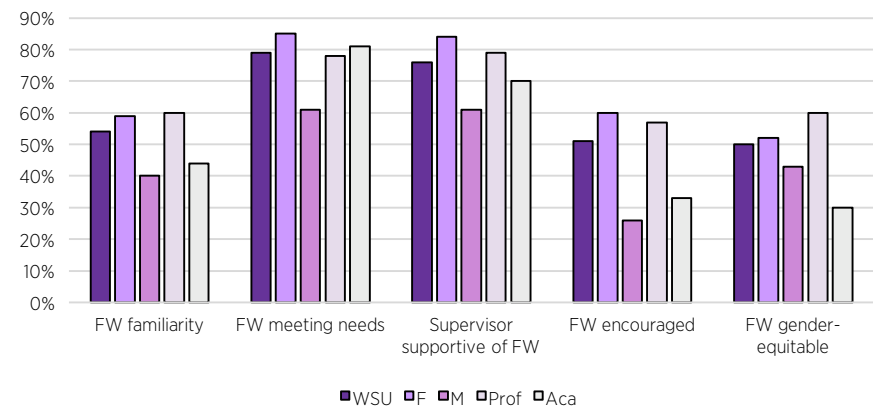


*Figure 6. Parent Cohort Positivity for FW Prompts by Gender and Employment Type, PL Survey, 2018.*

*Key Findings: Parents scored higher than the broader cohort for supervisor support (+10%) and individual needs met (+7%), but lower for FW familiarity (-15%) and perceived gender-equitability (-12%). Male parents scored lower than female counterparts for FW-familiarity (-19%), needs met (-24%), supervisor support (-23%), FW encouragement (-34%), and gender-equitability (-9%). Academic parents also differed from professionals around three prompts: FW-familiarity (-16%), gender equitability (-30%) and FW-encouragement (-24%).*

# ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

What did you do to remove or reduce the barrier?

## Defining Objectives

Responsive to identified barriers, six objectives were identified (Table 5), with measurable targets established for future workplace surveys (Table 7).

*Table 5. Flexible Work Cygnet Key Priority Area (KPA) Objectives*

| Flexible Work Cygnet KPA Objectives | | |
|---|---|---|
| Objectives | | |
| Objective Ref | Objective | Barrier Ref |
| Objective 1 | Sustain broad FW satisfaction and raise perception of FW encouragement | Barrier 3 |
| Objective 2 | **Increase familiarity with FW options**, especially for identified target cohorts: male parents, academics parents, and Indigenous staff | Barrier 3 |
| Objective 3 | Bolster male parent uptake, satisfaction and perceptions of FW supports | Barrier 1 & 3 |
| Objective 4 | Address perceived gender inequities around FW implementation | Barrier 4 |
| Objective 5 | Improve Indigenous staff FW satisfaction | Barrier 2 |
| Objective 6 | Establish FW baseline data for Carers, CALD staff and staff with Disability | Barrier 5 |

A FW-SWAG was convened to track progress against targets, with the Chief People Officer engaged as Executive Sponsor (Table 6). Existing strategic goals and planned Bronze Award actions were reviewed, re-confirmed as Cygnet priorities and aligned with newly established objectives, forming the basis of an FW Action Plan (Table 8).

*Table 6. Flexible Work SWAG Members*

| Flexible Work SWAG Members | | |
|---|---|---|
| Role | Name | WSU Title |
| Executive Sponsor | Amy Morris | Chief People Officer, Office of People |
| SWAG Leader | Dr Kieryn McKay | SAGE Project Coordinator, Office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise & International) |
| SWAG Member | A/Prof Mark Antoniou | Associate Professor, MARCS Institute for Brain, Behaviour and Development |
| SWAG Member | Dr Simi Bajaj | Deputy Associate Dean (International, Southeast Asia), School of Data, Computer and Mathematical Sciences |
| SWAG Member | Daniel Collins | UX/LX Designer, Technology-Enabled Learning, Office of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (Learning Futures) |
| SWAG Member | Katie Hayes | Senior Project Officer, Office of Equity, Diversity and Wellbeing |

*Table 7. Flexible Work KPA Objectives with Outcomes Measures*

| Flexible Work Cygnet KPA Objectives with Outcomes Measures | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objectives** | | | | | **Outcomes Measures** | | |
| Ref. | Objective | Target Cohort | Prompt / Category | Sustain/Increase/Align | B'Mark | Aim ↑ | Target |
| Objective 1 | Sustain broad staff FW satisfaction, raise perception of FW encouragement | All staff | "I have the flexibility I need to meet my work and other commitments" | Sustain | 77% | - | 77% |
| | | | "I feel supported by my immediate supervisor to request FW arrangements" | Sustain | 74% | - | 74% |
| | | | "Flexible Work is actively encouraged at WSU" | Increase | 58% | 10% | 68% |
| Objective 2 | Increase staff familiarity with FW options, including for identified target cohorts | All staff | "I have been provided information about FW options by the University" | Increase | 37% | 25% | 62% |
| | | All staff | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Increase | 69% | 10% | 79% |
| | | Academics | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Increase | 51% | 10% | 61% |
| | | Parents | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Increase | 54% | 20% | 74% |
| | | Male parents | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Increase | 40% | 20% | 60% |
| | | Academic parents | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Increase | 44% | 20% | 64% |
| | | Indigenous staff | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 79% |
| Objective 3 | Bolster male parent satisfaction with and perceptions of Flexible Work | Male parents | "Flexible Work is actively encouraged at WSU" | Increase to align with all parents | 26% | 25% | 51% |
| | | | "I feel supported by my immediate supervisor to request FW arrangements" | Increase to align with all parents | 61% | 15% | 76% |
| | | | Uptake of at least one FW option | Increase | 38% | 15% | 53% |
| | | | "I have the flexibility I need to meet my work and other commitments" | Increase to align with all parents | 61% | 18% | 79% |
| Objective 4 | Address gender equity perceptions around FW implementation | Male staff | "Flexible Work is actively encouraged at WSU" | Increase to align with female staff | 51% | 8% | 59% |
| | | Male staff | "I feel supported by my immediate supervisor to request FW arrangements" | Increase to align with female staff | 68% | 9% | 77% |
| | | Male parents | "FW options are equally available at WSU, regardless of gender" | Increase to align with all parents | 43% | 29% | 62% |
| | | Academic parents | "FW options are equally available at WSU, regardless of gender" | Increase to align with all parents | 30% | 32% | 62% |
| Objective 5 | Improve Indigenous staff satisfaction with Flexible Work and Work/Life Balance | Indigenous staff | Flexibility | Increase to align with all staff | 63% | 9% | 72% |
| | | | Work/Life Balance | Increase to align with all staff | 50% | 14% | 64% |
| | | | "Flexible Work is actively encouraged at WSU" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 58% |
| | | | "I feel supported by my immediate supervisor to request FW arrangements" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 74% |
| | | | "I have the flexibility I need to meet my work and other commitments" | Increase to align with all staff | 53% | 14% | 67% |
| | | | "I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life" | Increase to align with all staff | 46% | 14% | 60% |
| Objective 6 | Establish baseline FW data for additional diversity cohorts | CALD, Carers and staff with Disability | "I am familiar with WSU's FW options" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 61% |
| | | | "Flexible Work is actively encouraged at WSU" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 58% |
| | | | "I feel supported by my immediate supervisor to request FW arrangements" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 74% |
| | | | "I have the flexibility I need to meet my work and other commitments" | Establish & align with all staff | - | - | 77% |

*Table 8. Flexible Work Action Plan, 2019 - 2022*

| Flexible Work Action Plan, with Planned and Actual KPA Activities and Outputs, 2019 – 2022 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Alignment | | | |
| Action | Purpose | Responsibility | *GE-Strategy* / Bronze | KPA Obj. | Scheduled | Completed |
| **Phase 1: Building Consistent and Inclusive FW Practice, 2018 – 2020** | | | | | | |
| FW training content (EEO insertion) | Improve equitable implementation of FW policy and practice | OEDW | *GE-Strategy 5.5; Bronze 3.11.2* | 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 | 2018 | 2018 |
| *Business Case for Flexible Work* | Raise awareness around FW benefits, especially among supervisors and managers | OEDW | *GE-Strategy 5.5; Bronze 3.11.2* | 1, 2 & 3 | 2019 | 2019 |
| *Western Dads,* VC-GEF Project | Raise visibility for male parents accessing Flexible Work | VC-GEC | *GE-Strategy 5.4; Bronze 3.11.2* | 3 & 4 | 2019 | 2019 |
| Wellness & Flexibility Program | Direct support for staff managing work/life balance | EDWP Law | *Bronze 3.11.1 & 3.11.2* | 1 & 2 | 2020 | Deferred |
| FW Implementation Study | Investigate inconsistent local implementation of FW policy | EDWPs SHCA & Divisions | *GE-Strategy 5.5 & 5.9; Bronze 3.11.2* | 3, 4 & 5 | 2020 | Deferred |
| Refine FW Survey Instruments | Build capacity for tracking FW experiences for Carers and Staff with Disability | OHR & SAGE | *GE-Strategy 5.9* | 6 | 2020 | 2022 |
| **Phase 2: Leveraging FW Opportunity from COVID-19 Circumstances, 2020 – 2021** | | | | | | |
| FW VC-GEC Subgroup | Revise policy and procedure around remote work | VC-GEC | *GE-Strategy 5.1* | 1 | - | 2020 |
| Remote Work Pilot (FW-Pilot) | Increase all-staff access to remote work arrangements | OHR | *GE-Strategy 5.4; Bronze 3.11.2* | 1 | - | 2020 |
| *Flexibility Matters* Toolkit | Streamline information and advice around FW access | OEDW | *GE-Strategy 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 & 5.5; Bronze 3.11.1 & 3.11.2* | 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 | - | 2020 |
| All-Staff Webinar FW content | Raise staff awareness and understanding of FW-Pilot | OVC | *Bronze 3.11.1* | 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 | - | 2020 |
| Gender UNLIMITED*: Gender Equity and COVID-19 | Reflect on gendered impacts of COVID-19, including VC keynote referencing new FW-Pilot | SAGE | *Bronze 3.11.1* | 1 | - | 2020 |
| **Phase 3: Embedding Inclusive FW Priorities, 2021 – 2022** | | | | | | |
| Expand FW content in EEO training | Alert supervisor/managers to *Flexibility Matters* toolkit, encourage FW promotion, debunk gender stereotypes | OEDW | *GE-Strategy 5.5; Bronze 3.11.2* | 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 | 2021 | 2021 |
| Staff Drop-In Spaces (Pilot) | Create agile work facilities for staff flexibility across campuses | Capital Works | - | 1 | - | 2022 |
| Expand FW leave entitlements | Ensure FW leave entitlements are responsive to diverse needs | OHR | *GE-Strategy 5.1* | 1 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Formalise FW Pilot in *EA*s | Structurally embed and protect FW commitments | OHR | *GE-Strategy 5.1* | 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 | - | 2022 |
| Formalise ongoing FW priorities in *GE Strategy, 2021 – 2026* | Structurally embed FW commitments in organisational strategy | OEDW | *GE-Strategy 5.1; Bronze 3.11.1* | 1 | 2021 | 2021 |
| Gender UNLIMITED*: Bold and Inclusive Futures | Showcase FW KPA and workshop staff priorities for improvement | SAGE | *Bronze 3.11.1* | 1 | 2021 | 2021 |
| Inclusive Policy Review | Ensure *Workplace Flexibility Policy* is inclusive of staff diversity | SAGE | *GE-Strategy 5.1* | 3, 4, 5 & 6 | 2022 | 2022 |
| Indigenous Staff FW Impact Study | Investigate, embed and sustain FW benefits for Indigenous staff | SAGE | *GE-Strategy 5.9* | 5 | 2022 | Deferred to 2023 |
| *Flexibility Matters* promotional video | Raise staff awareness around FW options and benefits | SAGE | *GE-Strategy 5.2, 5.3, 5.4 & 5.5; Bronze 3.11.1* | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 | 2022 | 2022 |

# Summary of Progress

Considerable work was undertaken to advance Cygnet Objectives, with initial action (in 2019) focused on building more consistent and inclusive FW practice. However, as work progressed, the COVID-19 pandemic substantially affected this KPA (from 2020). In particular, intended action to improve FW policy and implementation across a breadth of FW options shifted focus as 'stay-at-home' circumstances concentrated attention on remote work.

### Phase 1. Building Consistent and Inclusive FW-Practice, 2019

Targeted at supervisors and managers, a *Business Case for Flexible Work* (2019) promoted WSU's pro-FW organisational position (Figure 7). FW content was inserted into compulsory "Equal Opportunity" training and more fulsome, voluntary "Flexible Work at WSU" supervisor/manager training was introduced to enhance knowledge of FW provisions and the benefits of working flexibly at WSU.

VC-GEF project, *Western Dads*, celebrated male parents via a calendar and launch, promoting positive experiences of fathering and FW supports (Figure 8). Three EDWP-led projects aiming to improve consistency of FW implementation across local units were planned for 2020 but impeded by COVID-19 disruptions (see Table 8).
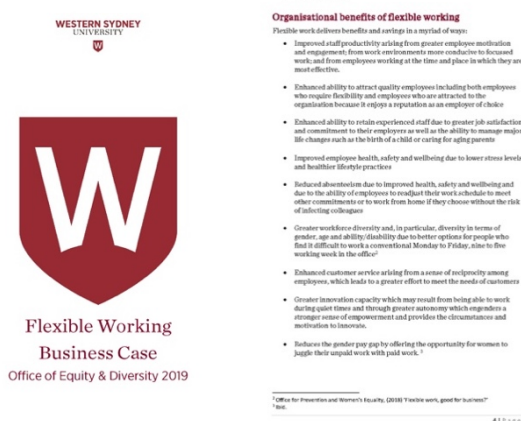


*Figure 7. Business Case for Flexible Work (2019) reminded supervisors and managers of the organisational benefits of FW, including improved productivity, attracting and retaining talent, reduced absenteeism, enhanced student experience and improved gender equity outcomes.*



*Figure 8. Feature image, Western Dads Calendar, Vice-Chancellor's Gender Equity Fund (Duffy et al., 2019). Western Dads celebrated male parents and promoted FW supports.*

### Phase 2. Leveraging FW Opportunity from COVID-19 Circumstances, 2020 – 2021

As COVID-19 descended, NSW 'Stay-at-Home' orders restricted staff movement March–May 2020 and June–October 2021 and WSU took a cautious approach to staff safety (see *Institutional Context*). As such, most staff worked remotely for large proportions of 2020–2021.

Throughout these extended periods, staff were afforded greater flexibility of working hours to manage rising care commitments and personal welfare. Along with technological, pedagogical and WH&S supports, various initiatives were implemented to promote work/life balance and wellbeing while working remotely, including tailored supports for Emerging Women and staff with caring responsibilities (Table 9).

*Table 9. COVID-19 Remote Work Supports & Work Practice Changes, 2020 - 2021*

| Remote Work Supports and Work Practice Changes during COVID-19, 2020 – 2021 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Action** | **Responsibility** | **Target Cohort** | **Purpose** | **Date(s)** | **'20** | **'21** |
| **University-Wide Supports and Work Practice Changes** | | | | | | |
| Work from Home Readiness Survey | OHR | All staff | Identify technological and WH&S supports | Released 18 March 2020 | ✔ | - |
| Vice-Chancellor's All-Staff Webinars | OVC | All staff | Staff information, updates and connectivity, including FW and wellbeing advice | Fortnightly, from March 2020 | ✔ | ✔ |
| Regular workload & wellbeing check-in meetings | All org units | All staff | Work/life balance, wellbeing & staff connectivity | Weekly, fortnightly, and/or drop-in, from April 2020 | ✔ | ✔ |
| YamJam: Managing Work, Home and Parenting during COVID-19 | NEW | Emerging women | WfH advice & guidance for carers, facilitated on Yammer by gender equity panellists | 4 June 2020 | ✔ | - |
| Seminar: Work from Home Support | NEW | Emerging Women | WfH advice & guidance for emerging career women, facilitated by DVC-A | 15 Sept 2020 | ✔ | - |
| Seminar: Researcher, Writer, Mother: How to Survive Working from Home (Figure 10) | SHCA | All staff & HDRs | Research advice & networking guidance for WfH, facilitated by HDRs and academics | 12 June 2020 | ✔ | - |
| Parents & Carers WfH Coaching Sessions | EPN, DVC-REI & OEDW | Parents & carers | Balancing work from home with carer responsibilities, external facilitator | Six sessions, June – July 2020 | ✔ | - |
| Fact Sheet: Support for Parents & Carers during COVID-19 | OEDW | Supervisors & managers | Parent and carer supports while working remotely, including FW policy and advice | Released 28 April 2020 | ✔ | ✔ |
| Fact Sheet: Domestic & Family Violence support during COVID-19 | OEDW | Supervisors & managers | DFV resources while working remotely, including leave and safe access supports | Released 28 April 2020 | ✔ | ✔ |
| Fact Sheet: Mental Health support during COVID-19 | OEDW | Supervisors & managers | Wellbeing supports, incl. managing isolation | Released 28 April 2020 | ✔ | ✔ |
| Zoom Meeting Protocols: Adjusted meeting times (core hours) + Reduced meeting length (50 mins) | All org units | All staff | Support flexibility for parents and carers; Manage all-staff online fatigue | Ongoing, from 12 July 2021 | - | ✔ |
| **Sample Local COVID-era Supports for Remote Work & Wellbeing** | | | | | | |
| Virtual tea/lunch/drinks and other virtual socials (e.g., trivia, bingo, cooking clubs) | Most org units | Local staff | Staff connectivity & wellbeing during extended remote work conditions | Weekly or fortnightly | ✔ | ✔ |
| ICS Radio | ICS | All staff | Assist staff transition out of work day while working remotely | Weekly, Aug – Nov | - | ✔ |
| Workshops: Self-care, Mindfulness, Emotional Intelligence | SoB | Local staff | Wellbeing advice & guidance for sustained remote work, with internal and external facilitators | Sporadic | ✔ | ✔ |
| Wellbeing activities (e.g., yoga, meditation, exercise, choir [Figure 9], etc.) | Various Schools & Divisions | | | Sporadic | - | ✔ |
| Wellbeing Program | DFR | | | 6 weeks | - | ✔ |
| Wellness Week | SoB | | | 1 week, September | - | ✔ |
| Workshops: Mindfulness, Wellbeing and Avoiding Burnout | AD | | | July & October 2021 | - | ✔ |

Figure 10. SHCA's seminar "Researcher, Writer, Mother: How to Survive Working from Home" (12 June 2020) attracted 95 highly engaged staff and HDR participants.



Figure 9. The MARCS Institute Choir's remote-work inspired adaptation of "Happy" attracted 584 staff views on Yammer.

## _Scoping a Remote Work Opportunity_

Recognising potential FW opportunity, WSU sought to assess experiences of increased remote work via a truncated *MyVoice* survey, administered July 2020 (Table 10).

Table 10. Respondent Diversity for MyVoice COVID-19 Check-In Survey, 2020

| Staff Diversity in *MyVoice Check-In* Responses, 2020 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of Responses (*n*) by Cohort | | | | | | | | | |
| Survey | WSU | F | M | Prof | Aca | Parent | Carer | Indigenous | CALD | W Disability |
| *MyVoice COVID-19 Check-In* Survey | 2,335 | 1,320 | 775 | 1,374 | 784 | 1,109 | 513 | 54 | 1,659 | 99 |

Two FW prompts and one top-level category were comparable against prior data (Figure 11 & Figure 12).  Responses indicated improved work/life balance for all cohorts (+6-10%) and large increases for Indigenous staff overall (+28%). Two new prompts addressed remote work specifically, with two-thirds of staff confirming improved work/life balance and half identifying improved wellbeing, despite the pandemic context (Table 11).

Table 11. WSU Staff Positivity for MyVoice COVID-19 Check-In Remote Work Prompts, 2020

| Staff Positivity for Remote Work Prompts, *MyVoice Check-In*, July – August 2020 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Positive Response Rate by Cohort | | | | | | | | | |
| Question | WSU (*n*=2,235) | F (*n*=1,320) | M (*n*=775) | Prof (*n*=1,374) | Aca (*n*=784) | Parent (*n*=1,109) | Carer (*n*=513) | Indigenous (*n*=54) | EAL/D (*n*=1,659) | W Disability (*n*=99) |
| I have been able to more effectively manage my work/life balance under the remote working arrangements than before | 66% | 69% | 62% | 76% | 46% | 66% | 64% | 76% | 69% | 57% |
| My personal wellbeing has improved since working remotely as compared to previously | 49% | 53% | 46% | 58% | 35% | 51% | 51% | 56% | 59% | 47% |

A DVC-A hosted Network for Emerging Women seminar report also elaborated emerging benefits and challenges of increased remote work for this key GEDI cohort (Table 12).
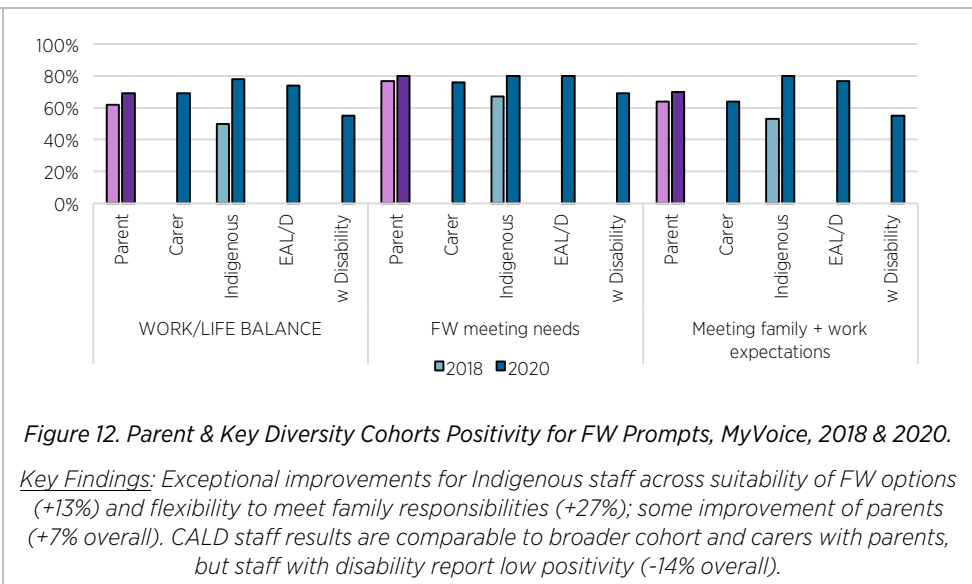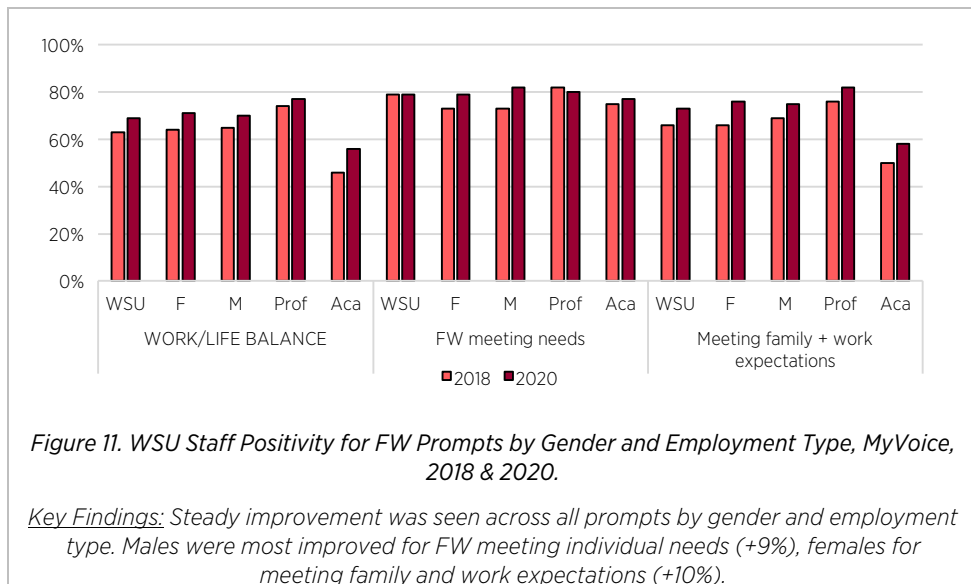
Figure 11. WSU Staff Positivity for FW Prompts by Gender and Employment Type, MyVoice, 2018 & 2020.

*Key Findings:* Steady improvement was seen across all prompts by gender and employment type. Males were most improved for FW meeting individual needs (+9%), females for meeting family and work expectations (+10%).



Figure 12. Parent & Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity for FW Prompts, MyVoice, 2018 & 2020.

*Key Findings:* Exceptional improvements for Indigenous staff across suitability of FW options (+13%) and flexibility to meet family responsibilities (+27%); some improvement of parents (+7% overall). CALD staff results are comparable to broader cohort and carers with parents, but staff with disability report low positivity (-14% overall).

Table 12. Network for Emerging Women Reflections on COVID-19 Remote Work Circumstances, 2020

| Network for Emerging Women Reflections on Remote Work during COVID-19, 2020 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Emerging Benefits** | | **Emerging Challenges** | |
| **Work-Related** | Personal | **Work-Related** | Personal |
| – Clearer work priorities<br>– Improved productivity & greater efficiency<br>– Greater focus for complex tasks<br>– Greater adaptability of schedules<br>– Improved technical capabilities<br>– Zoom meetings are more democratic since they 'flatten out' the hierarchy<br>– Greater access to forums and events<br>– Easier international collaboration<br>– More flexible meeting times with students<br>– Online programs attracting more engagement<br>– Work from home stigma has disappeared<br>– More humanised relation to colleagues | – Better work/life balance<br>– More responsive to personal needs (e.g., health, wellbeing, disability)<br>– More time with family, loved ones, and pets<br>– More responsive to caring needs<br>– Caring responsibilities more visible<br>– More relaxed<br>– Better at setting boundaries<br>– No commute<br>– Cheaper (no travel or food costs) | – Working longer hours to manage COVID-19 impacts<br>– Challenging to adapt to new routines<br>– Less "corridor conversations", more meetings<br>– Online overload<br>– Unreliable internet connections<br>– Some difficulty accessing work supports | – Social disconnection<br>– Reduced exercise/movement<br>– Blended home/work space<br>– No work/life time distinction (i.e., no end-of-day transitions, not stopping for lunch)<br>– Less time for self (i.e., no break from care)<br>– Individual circumstances shape individual effects |

*VC-GEC Subgroup and Remote Work Pilot*

Responding to growing evidence of remote work benefits for many, the Vice-Chancellor convened a VC-GEC Subgroup to review ongoing FW provisions to maximise GEDI benefits. The Subgroup adopted an operational Framework, responsive to the COVID-19 environment (Table 13).

In October 2020, the Subgroup established a Remote Work Pilot (RW-Pilot) to promote a new hybrid work model, wherein all staff became entitled to apply to work remotely for up to 2 days per week on an ongoing basis (Table 14 & Figure 13). RW-Pilot details were distributed via Vice-Chancellor emails, promoted by Senior Executive at All-Staff Webinars, and profiled at "Gender UNLIMITED*: Gender Equity and COVID-19". Changes were refreshed in FW training content and *Staff* and *Supervisors Disability Toolkits*.
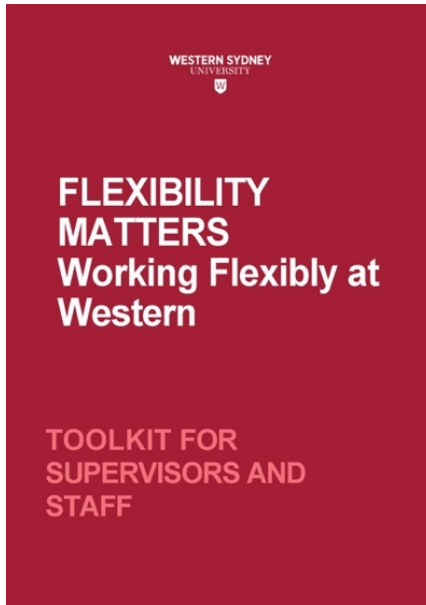
Remaining a high-profile topic throughout 2021, the RW-Pilot featured in Women's Conference panel discussions and at "Gender UNLIMITED: Bold and Inclusive Futures", where the Chief People Officer and staff also workshopped priorities for ongoing improvements.

*Table 13. Vice-Chancellor's Flexible Work Subgroup Framework, 2020*

| VC-GEC Flexible Work Subgroup: Principles and Objectives, 2020 | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Steps | Principles | Objectives |
| 1. Scope Good Practice, Adjust Policy | Use newly acquired FW insights learned from the COVID-19 period and identify structural opportunities to expand benefits | Expand awareness and opportunity for FW practices across the University |
| 2. Build capacity, Raise Awareness | Design mechanisms based on evidence (including staff feedback), accounting for diversity of circumstances | Advance GEDI outcomes through FW practice and shift organisational culture to consider FW the 'norm' for all staff |
| 3. Evaluate, Re-adjust, Embed | Build in fluidity and re-adjustment throughout the implementation phase, as required by shifting COVID circumstances | Harness COVID-context remote work benefits and structurally embed opportunity for expanded FW |

*Table 14. Remote Work Pilot (RW-Pilot): Key Components*

| Hybrid Remote Work Pilot: Key Components | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Component | Purpose | Date |
| *Work from Home Guidelines* | Instituted a 'right to apply' for up to 2 days/week remote work for all professional staff | October 2020 |
| *Flexibility Matters: Toolkit for Supervisors and Staff* | All-encompassing FW handbook, streamlining FW information and comprising strategic priority content aligned with Cygnet objectives, including:<br>▪ 'myth-busting' FW misconceptions;<br>▪ FW benefit profiles for academics;<br>▪ advice for managing FW for professional and academic leaders;<br>▪ checklists for staff and supervisors. | October 2020 |
| Formal Work from Home Agreements (WfHAs) | Standardised, online application from for remote work arrangements up to 2 days/week | January 2021 |

*Figure 13. Flexibility Matters: Toolkit for Supervisors and Staff (2020), including myth-busting content and Checklists for Supervisors.*

## Phase 3. Embedding Inclusive FW Priorities, 2021 – 2022

Complementing the hybrid RW-Pilot, in May 2022 WSU launched "Staff Drop-In Spaces" (Figure 15) for staff working flexibly across campuses. In August 2022, WSU became the first Australian university to enshrine a 'right to apply' for proportional WfHAs in *Enterprise Agreements* (Figure 14).[1]

**SUBCLAUSE 34.5:**

"Subject to subclause 34.7, the University will make remote working arrangements available to all Employees."

*Professional Staff Enterprise Agreement, p.44*

*Figure 14. Introductory subclause for Remote Work 'right to apply' in Enterprise Agreements, 2022*
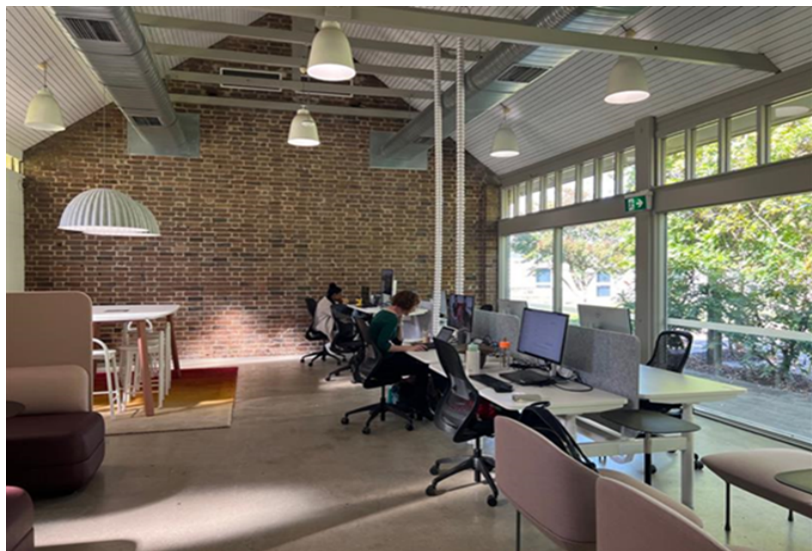


*Figure 15. Staff Drop-In Spaces launched at Campbelltown, Hawkesbury, Parramatta City, and Parramatta South campuses in May 2022 promote cross-campus flexibility.*

---

[1] Julie Hare and David Marin-Guzman (2022) "First Victory in Push to Make WFH an Employment 'Right', *Australian Financial Review*, 13 October. Available at: https://www.afr.com/work-and-careers/education/first-victory-in-push-to-make-wfh-an-employment-right-20221013-p5bpgu

*GE-Strategy, 2021–2026*, reasserted FW commitments, with emphasis on enhanced inclusive practices, underwritten by newly articulated expectations for informed inclusive leadership and intersectional understandings of equal opportunity (Table 15). The Inclusive Policy Review project selected *Workplace Flexibility Policy* for case study analysis, identifying further amendments to maximise policy inclusivity.

A SAGE-led research project to identify and embed FW improvements for Indigenous staff was planned for 2022, but deferred to 2023 following delays securing an Indigenous-identified Research Assistant as required by WSU's *SAGE Indigenous Collaboration Framework*.

In November 2022, SAGE produced *Flexibility Matters* (Figure 16) to promote the breadth of FW options that support WSU's diverse staff community, including for males, academic parents, and Indigenous staff. The video features Senior Executive, supervisors and diverse staff members and emphasises responsive supervisor/staff partnerships.



*Figure 16. SAGE Deputy Academic Lead, Dr Chloe Taylor, interviews VC-GE Fund researcher Dr Michelle O'Shea for promotional video Flexibility Matters, 2022.*

*Table 15. Flexible Work Priorities in WSU's Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan, 2021-2026*

| Flexible Work in WSU's *Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan*, 2021–2026 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Years | |
| Goal | Goal Detail | Action | 2021 – 23 | 2024 – 26 |
| 4. Culture, Community and Inclusive Practice | 4.2. Champion and embed FW options for staff | Increase FW promotion and address ongoing issues of inconsistent application | ✔ | ✔ |
| | | Conduct a regular pulse survey to track FW uptake and experiences | ✔ | ✔ |
| | 4.3. Promote Western as a family-friendly University and structurally support work/life balance for carers of all genders | Develop case study examples of male team leaders and managers who engage in FW, to erode stereotypes around entitlements | ✔ | - |
| | | Evaluate progress on men's FW engagement via tracking uptake | - | ✔ |
| 1. Sustaining Leadership, Recognition & Accountability on Gender Equity | 1.2. Prioritise effective inclusive leadership practices which support the career longevity and leadership aspirations of women and gender diverse individuals of all backgrounds and identities | Undertake a scoping exercise to identify additional challenges for Indigenous women and gender diverse individuals | ✔ | ✔ |
| | | Develop and implement recommendations stemming from data collected from the scoping exercise | - | ✔ |
| 3. Equal Opportunity in the Staff and Student Lifecycle | 3.1. Train staff in the principles of equal opportunity, respectful relationships, gender equity and diversity and intersectionality. | Require all staff and student leaders to complete Equal Opportunity training as appointed and every 2 years thereafter | ✔ | ✔ |
| | 3.5. Increase organisational awareness of the compounding intersectional factors that influence outcomes for women and gender diverse individuals | Undertake research on the compounding impacts of intersectionality | ✔ | ✔ |
| | | Implement recommendations stemming from intersectional research findings | - | ✔ |

# OUTCOMES

## What is the evidence that the barrier has been removed or reduced?

Staff uptake and experience outcomes were evaluated via a FW-focused Pulse Survey (Table 16), benchmarked where possible against prior data and disaggregated by cohort (Table 17). Unfortunately, COVID-induced change processes resulted in FW-Subgroup recommendations for tracking RW-Pilot uptake data not being implemented successfully. Consequently, formal WfHA uptake was also estimated by survey responses.

*Table 16. Flexible Work Outcomes Survey, 2020*

| Flexible Work Outcomes Survey, 2022 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Engagement | Purpose | | Respondents |
| Title | Focus | RR | *n* |
| Pulse #3: Flexible Work (*FW Pulse*) | All-staff organisational survey, with dedicated FW focus and capacity for intersectional analysis | 46% | 1,210 |

*Table 17. Respondent Diversity for Outcomes Survey, Pulse 3: Flexible Work, 2022*

| Staff Diversity in Outcomes Responses, *FW Pulse*, 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| WSU Staff (n) | | | | | | Parent Cohorts (n) | | | | | Key Diversity Cohorts (n) | | |
| WSU | F | M | X | Prof | Aca | WSU | F | M | Prof | Aca | Carer | Indigenous | CALD | W Disability |
| 1,210 | 784 | 330 | 7 | 807 | 391 | 467 | 317 | 122 | 315 | 151 | 226 | 37 | 393 | 193 |
| *Notes: When disaggregated by prompt, data for gender diverse staff are below minimum thresholds (>5) and therefore not detailed in data below; Survey questions defined Carer as per NSW Carers Recognition Act (2010).* | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

# Flexible Work Uptake

Available data indicates 50% all-staff and 71% professionals have formal WfHAs, with male professionals and Indigenous staff less likely (-14% and -27% respectively). A sizeable 70% of staff regularly work remotely at least 1 day/week (Table 18), with no significant variations by cohort (Figure 17 – Figure 19). One third of all-staff and more than half Indigenous respondents used flexible start/finish times.

Males and academics were most likely to report no formal FW arrangements, but less likely to do so when parents and still reported working from home at least occasionally (Figure 20). Male parents reporting no FW arrangements reduced considerably (-37% compared with 2018).

Table 18. Reported Staff Access to Flexible Work Arrangements, FW Pulse, 2022

| Staff Reported Access to Flexible Work Options, 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WSU Staff | | | | | Parent Cohorts | | | | | Key Diversity Cohorts | | |
| | WSU (n=1,081) | F (n=711) | M (n=300) | Prof (n=736) | Aca (n=345) | WSU (n=464) | F (n=317) | M (n=122) | Prof (n=315) | Aca (n=151) | Carer (n=122) | Indigenous (n=37) | CALD (n=342) | w Disability (n=193) |
| **FW Option** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Job Share | 0.6% | 0.8% | 0 | 7% | 0.6% | 0.9% | 0.9% | 0 | 0.6% | 1.3% | 0.8% | 0 | 0.9% | 0 |
| Formal Work from Home Agreement | 50% | 56% | 37% | 71% | 5% | 31% | 58% | 39% | 74% | 7% | 39% | 23% | 46% | 47% |
| Flexible start/finish times | 32% | 32% | 30% | 32% | 31% | 31% | 31% | 30% | 31% | 30% | 29% | 57% | 33% | 31% |
| Compressed Working Week | 1.6% | 1.5% | 1.6% | 1.3% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 2% | 1% | 4% | 3% | 0 | 1.4% | 0.5% |
| Work outside of standard hours | 11% | 11% | 12% | 5% | 23% | 12% | 9% | 5% | 7% | 23% | 13% | 13% | 12% | 8% |
| Other | 12% | 12% | 13% | 8% | 20% | 6% | 7% | 3% | 9% | 21% | 11% | 17% | 3% | 13% |
| No FW arrangements | 23% | 19% | 33% | 13% | 43% | 16% | 13% | 25% | 7% | 37% | 25% | 17% | 24% | 22% |
| **Work from Home Frequency** | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 days per week | 58% | 61% | 50% | 59% | 55% | 56% | 58% | 52% | 60% | 48% | 55% | 55% | 55% | 54% |
| 1 day per week | 12% | 12% | 13% | 12% | 12% | 12% | 13% | 11% | 12% | 11% | 12% | 13% | 8% | 10% |
| Less often than 1 day per week | 6% | 5% | 8% | 5% | 7% | 6% | 6% | 7% | 5% | 8% | 6% | 3% | 7% | 6% |
| Other | 11% | 11% | 10% | 8% | 18% | 11% | 11% | 11% | 6% | 21% | 9% | 0% | 12% | 19% |
| Never | 13% | 11% | 18% | 16% | 8% | 9% | 7% | 14% | 10% | 7% | 12% | 29% | 18% | 11% |
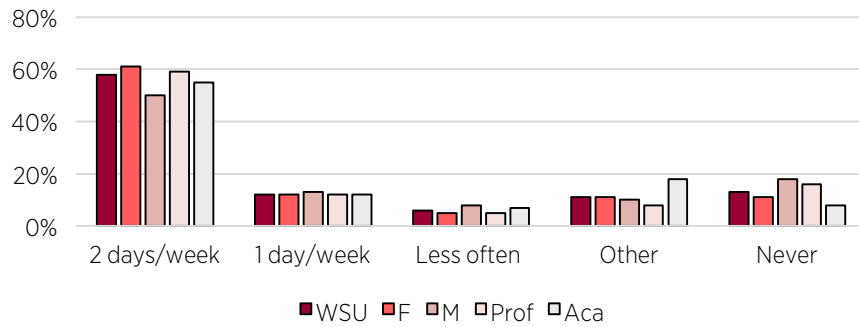
*Figure 17. WSU Staff Reported Work from Home Frequency by Gender and Employment Type, FW Pulse, 2022.*

*Key Findings: Approx. 70% of staff work from home at least 1 day/week across all cohorts.*
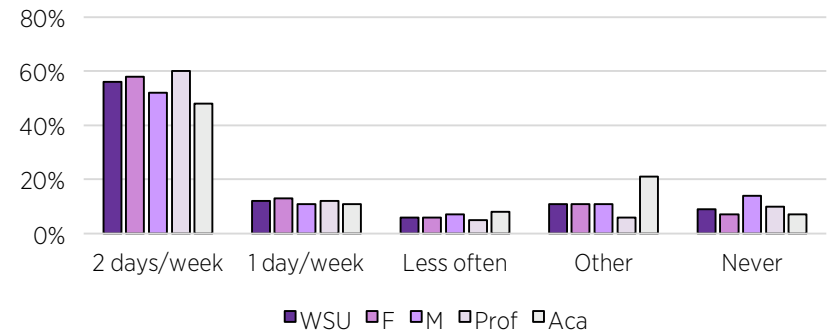


*Figure 18. Parent Cohorts Reported Work from Home Frequency, FW Pulse, 2022.*

*Key Findings: WSU parents worked from home at similar rates to the broader cohort, with no significant gender trends. Professional parents were more likely to work consistently from home 2 days/week, while academic parent patterns shifted according to teaching schedules.*
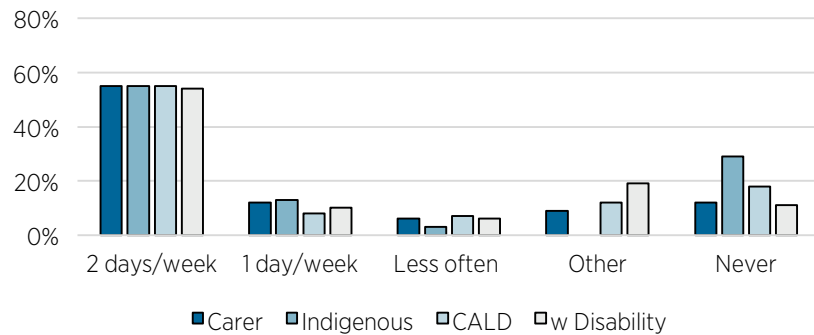


*Figure 19. Key Diversity Cohorts Reported Work from Home Frequency, FW Pulse, 2022.*

*Key Findings: Carers, Indigenous staff, CALD staff and staff with disability were as likely as other cohorts to work from at least 1 day/week.*
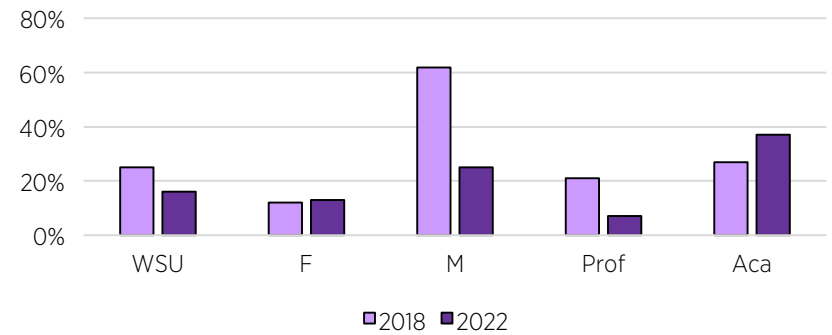


*Figure 20. Parent Cohorts Reporting No FW Arrangements, MyVoice, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.*

*Key Findings: Rates of male staff reporting no uptake of FW options dropped dramatically, from 62% in 2018 to 25% in 2022.*

## Flexible Work Experiences

Staff reported positive and improving FW experiences, with findings aligned to target cohorts:

- Positivity sustained (±5%) for individual flexibility and work/life balance, increasing for Indigenous staff (Figure 21 – Figure 26).

- Positivity stabilised for supervisor support, increasing substantially for male parents (Figure 27 – Figure 29).

- Dramatic improvements were seen for all-staff for provision of FW information, with high rates established across cohorts (Figure 30 – Figure 32), reinforced by large increases for FW familiarity, especially for parents (Figure 33 – Figure 35).

- FW encouragement advanced overall, with exceptional improvements for male parents (Figure 36 – Figure 38).

- Perceptions of gender equitably increased across cohorts, with male parents and academic parents outstanding (Figure 36 – Figure 41).

Success against objectives is detailed below.
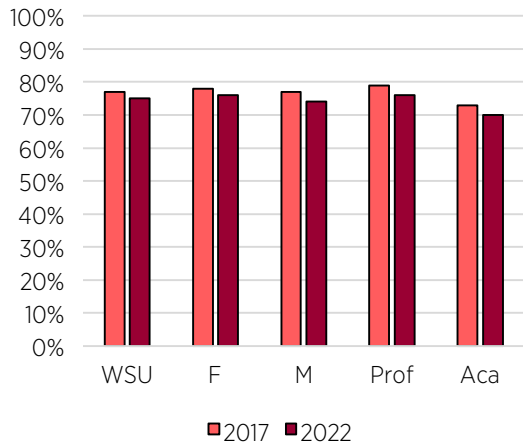
Figure 21. WSU Staff Positivity, FW Meeting Needs, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.



Figure 22. Parent Cohorts Positivity, FW Meeting Needs, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
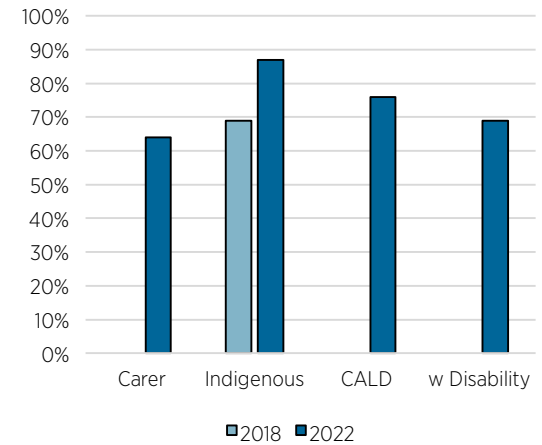


Figure 23. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, FW Meeting Needs, MyVoice, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
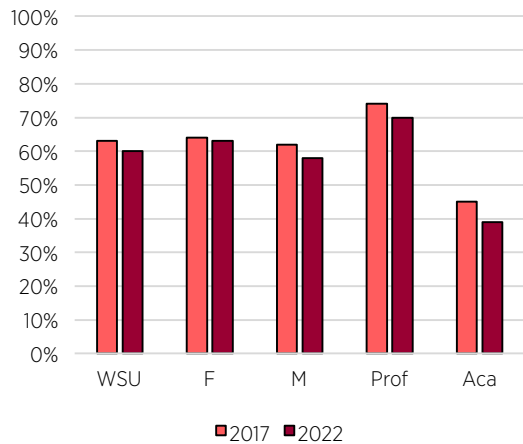
Figure 24. WSU Staff Positivity, Work/Life Balance, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.
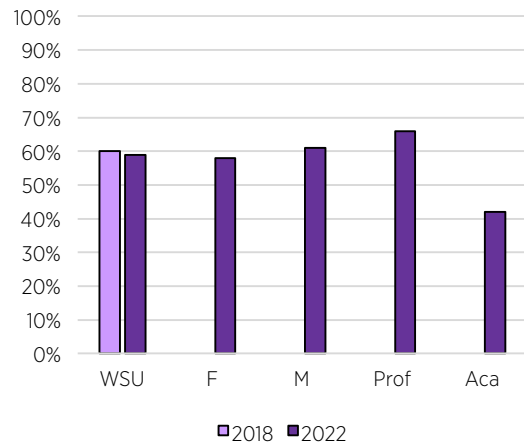


Figure 25. Parent Cohorts Positivity, Work/Life Balance, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
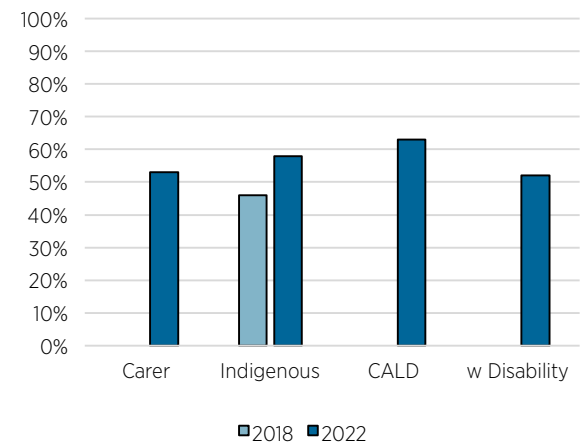


Figure 26. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, Work/Life Balance, MyVoice, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
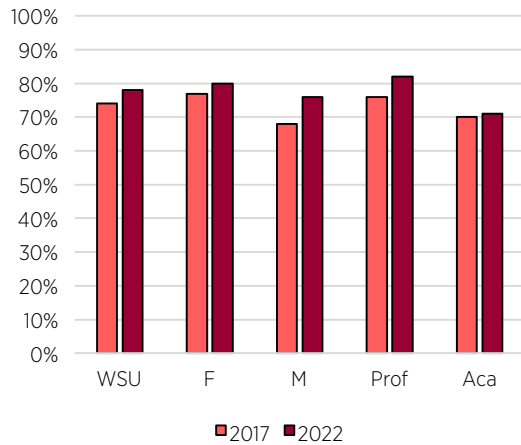
Figure 27. WSU Staff Positivity, Supervisor Support, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.
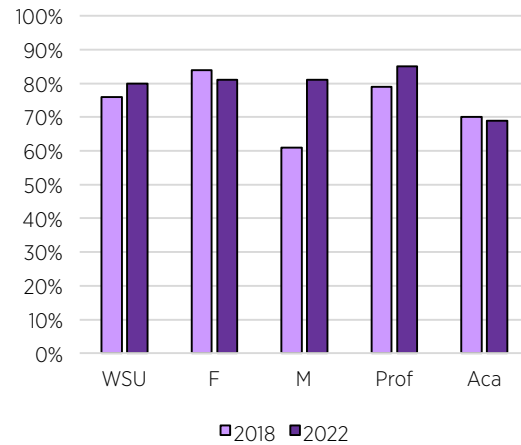


Figure 28. Parent Cohorts Positivity, Supervisor Support, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
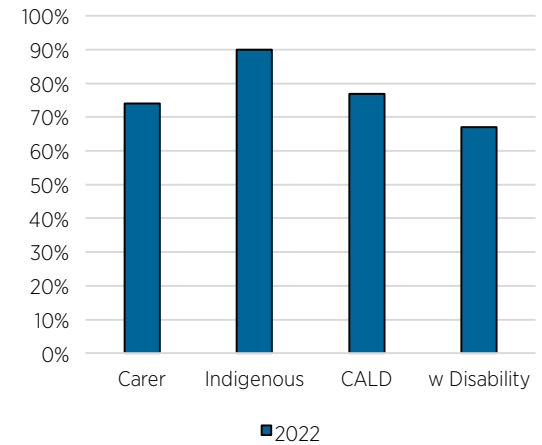


Figure 29. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, Supervisor Support, FW Pulse, 2022.

FW Prompt: *"I have been provided information about FW options by the University"*
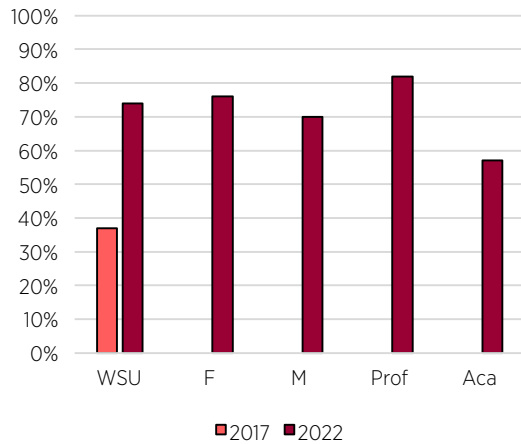


Figure 30. WSU Staff Positivity, Provided FW Information, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.
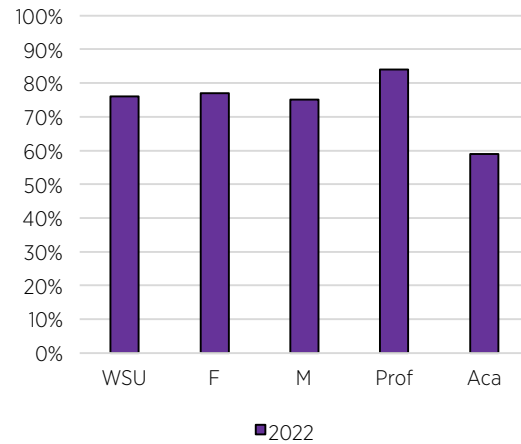


Figure 31. Parent Cohorts Positivity, Provided FW Information, FW Pulse, 2022.
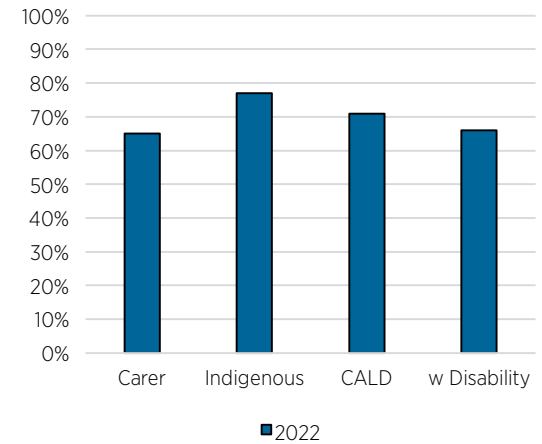


Figure 32. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, Provided FW Information, FW Pulse, 2022.

**FW Prompt:** *"I have a good understanding of the FW options available at WSU"*
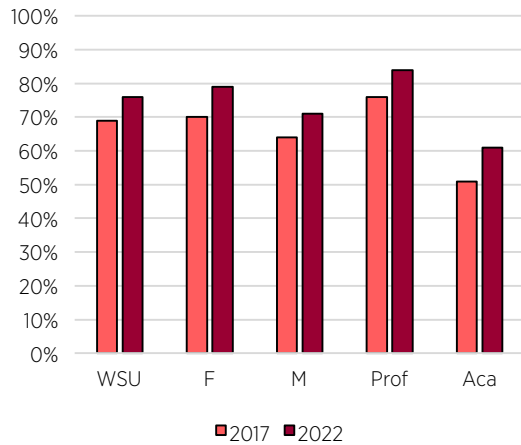


Figure 33. WSU Staff Positivity, FW Familiarity, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.
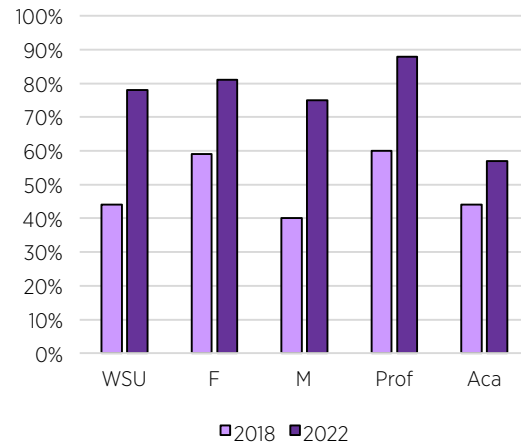
Figure 34. Parent Cohorts Positivity, FW Familiarity, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
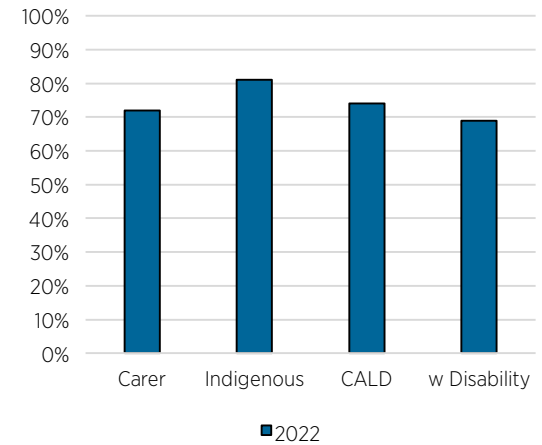
Figure 35. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, FW Familiarity, FW Pulse, 2022.

**FW Prompt:** *"FW is actively encouraged at WSU"*
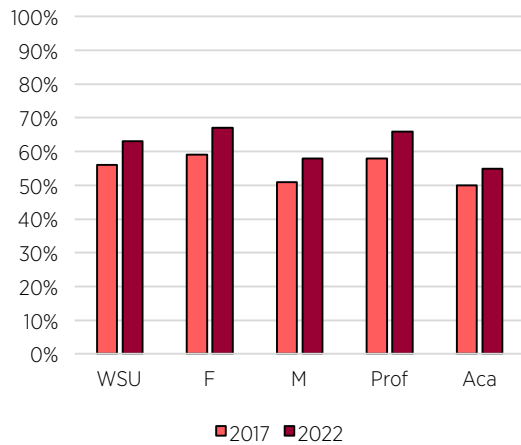


Figure 36. WSU Staff Positivity, FW Encouraged, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.
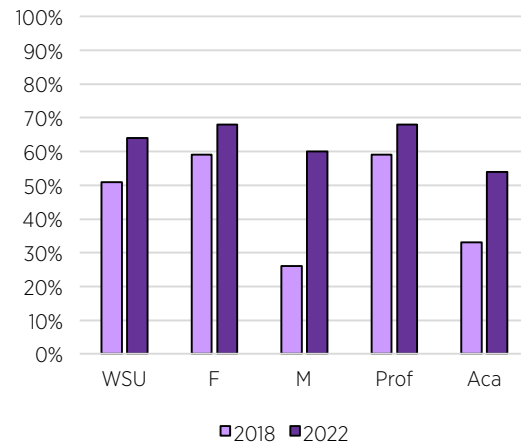
Figure 37. Parent Cohorts Positivity, FW Encouraged, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.
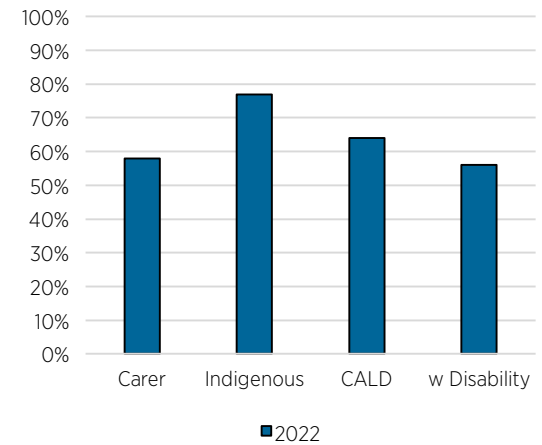
Figure 38. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, FW Encouraged, FW Pulse, 2022.

**FW Prompt:** *"FW is equally available at WSU, regardless of gender"*



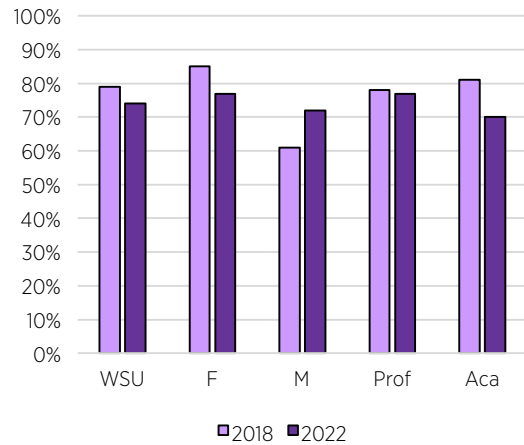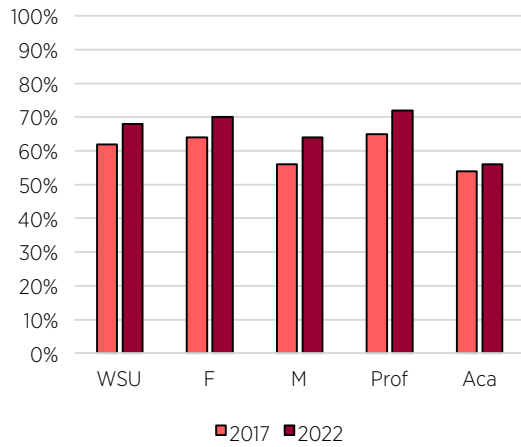*Figure 39. WSU Staff Positivity, FW Gender Equitable, FWFR Survey, 2017 & FW Pulse, 2022.*
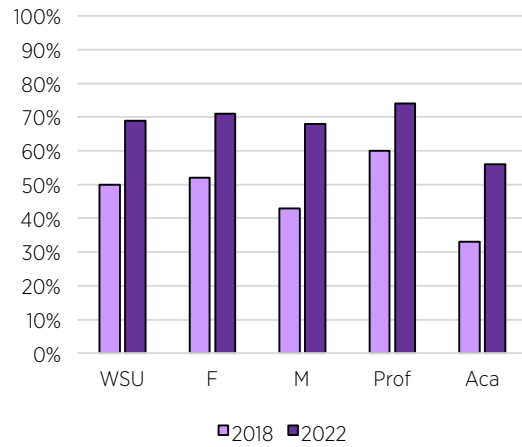
*Figure 40. Parent Cohorts Positivity, FW Gender Equitable, PL Survey, 2018 & FW Pulse, 2022.*
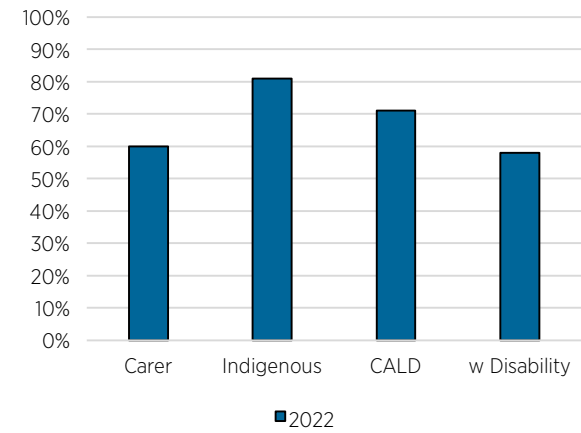
*Figure 41. Key Diversity Cohorts Positivity, FW Gender Equitable, FW Pulse, 2022.*

# Success Against Objectives

### Objective 1. Sustain FW Satisfaction, Raise Perception of FW Encouragement

Targets for sustaining broad staff satisfaction were met (±5%), with three quarters reporting satisfaction with FW meeting needs and support from supervisors (Table 19). Belief that FW is encouraged has meaningfully increased.

*Table 19. Flexible Work Objective 1: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 1 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Objective Detail | | Measures | | | |
| Objective | Detail | B'Mark | Aim ↑ | Target | Result |
| Sustain FW satisfaction, raise perception of FW encouragement | Increase belief that FW is encouraged | 58% | 10% | 68% | 68% |
| | Sustain satisfaction with FW meeting individual needs | 77% | - | 77% | 75% |
| | Sustain satisfaction with supervisor support | 74% | - | 74% | 74% |

### Objective 2. Increase Familiarity with FW Options

Efforts to increase FW familiarity were successful, with one target ("provided information") substantially exceeded (Table 20). Three quarters of all staff now report receiving FW information and familiarity with FW options.

Ambitious targets were met for academics, parents and Indigenous staff, and far exceeded for male parents. Academic parent familiarity improved but fell short of target, with no gender trends apparent.

*Table 20. Flexible Work Objective 2: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 2 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Objective Detail | | Measures | | | |
| Objective | Detail | B'Mark | Aim ↑ | Target | Result |
| Increase familiarity with Flexible Work options | Increase all-staff reporting that the University has provided information about FW options | 37% | 25% | 62% | 74% |
| | Increase all-staff familiarity with FW options | 69% | 10% | 79% | 76% |
| | Increase academic familiarity with FW options | 51% | 10% | 61% | 61% |
| | Increase parent familiarity with FW options | 54% | 20% | 74% | 78% |
| | Increase male parent familiarity with FW options | 40% | 20% | 60% | 75% |
| | Increase academic parent familiarity with FW options | 44% | 20% | 64% | 57% |
| | Establish Indigenous staff familiarity with FW options and align with all-staff rate | - | - | 79% | 81% |

## Objective 3. Bolster Male Parent Uptake, Satisfaction and Perceptions of FW Supports

Increased attentiveness to male parent experiences is having effect. Data shows outstanding improvement, with all but one target substantially exceeded (Table 21). <u>Three quarters of male parents now report access to least one FW option and two thirds work remotely at least 1 day/week</u>. Despite not reaching target, strong numbers are satisfied FW is meeting needs.

*Table 21. Flexible Work Objective 3: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 3 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective Detail** | | **Measures** | | | |
| **Objective** | **Detail** | **B'Mark** | **Aim ↑** | **Target** | **Result** |
| Bolster male parent satisfaction and perceptions of Flexible Work supports | Align agreement that "FW is encouraged at WSU" with all parents | 26% | 25% | 51% | 60% |
| | Align experiences of supervisor support with all parents | 61% | 15% | 76% | 81% |
| | Increase reported uptake of at least one FW option | 38% | 15% | 53% | 75% |
| | Increase satisfaction that flexibility is meeting individual needs | 61% | 18% | 79% | 72% |

## Objective 4. Address Perceptions of Gender Inequity

Concerns around gender-equitable FW access have lessened, with <u>male parent perceptions improved considerably and targets for male staff met</u> (Table 22). Academic parents just fell short of targets. <u>Male academic parents remaining the least convinced about gender parity</u> (-14% compared with female counterparts).

*Table 22. Flexible Work Objective 4: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 4 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective Detail** | | **Measures** | | | |
| **Objective** | **Detail** | **B'Mark** | **Aim ↑** | **Target** | **Result** |
| Address perceptions of gender inequity around Flexible Work implementation | Increase male staff belief that FW is actively encouraged | 51% | 8% | 59% | 58% |
| | Align male staff experiences of supervisor support with female staff | 68% | 9% | 77% | 76% |
| | Align male parent perceptions that FW is equally available regardless of gender with all staff | 43% | 29% | 62% | 68% |
| | Align academic parent perceptions that FW is equally available regardless of gender with all staff | 30% | 32% | 62% | 56% |

## Objective 5. Improve Indigenous Staff Satisfaction

Indigenous staff are now the most consistently satisfied with FW of all cohorts. Downward trends around work/life balance have corrected and all but one target was substantially exceeded (Table 23).

*Table 23. Flexible Work Objective 5: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 5 | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective Detail** | | | **Measures** | | |
| **Objective** | **Detail** | **B'Mark** | **Aim ↑** | **Target** | **Result** |
| Improve Indigenous staff satisfaction with Flexible Work | Align positive response rates to Flexibility *MyVoice* category with all staff | 63% | 9% | 72% | n/a* |
| | Align positive response rates to Work/Life Balance *MyVoice* category with all staff | 50% | 14% | 64% | 78% |
| | Establish belief that FW is actively encouraged & align with all staff | - | - | 58% | 77% |
| | Establish satisfaction with supervisor support & align with all staff | - | - | 74% | 90% |
| | Align agreement that FW is meeting individual needs | 53% | 14% | 67% | 87% |
| | Align agreement that "I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life" with all staff | 46% | 14% | 60% | 58% |
| *In 2020, "Flexibility" was superseded by a larger Work/Life Balance category, which encompassed prior FW prompts.* | | | | | |

## Objective 6. Establish Baseline Data for Carers, CALD and Staff With Disability

Baseline data for three additional diversity cohorts have been established (Table 24). Carers report a strong basis for FW, but below-parity satisfaction that individual needs are met. Staff with disability report lower satisfaction with meeting needs and supervisor support.

*Table 24. Flexible Work Objective 6: Outcomes Measures, 2022*

| Flexible Work Objective 6 | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Objectives** | | | **Measures** | |
| **Objective** | **Cohort** | **Detail** | **Target** | **Result** |
| Establish baseline data for additional diversity cohorts | Carers | Identify familiarity with FW options & align with all staff | 61% | 72% |
| | | Identify belief FW is actively encouraged & align with all staff | 58% | 57% |
| | | Identify satisfaction with supervisor support & align with all staff | 74% | 74% |
| | | Identify agreement flexibility is meeting individual needs | 77% | 64% |
| | CALD Staff | Identify familiarity with FW options & align with all staff | 61% | 74% |
| | | Identify belief FW is actively encouraged & align with all staff | 58% | 64% |
| | | Identify satisfaction with supervisor support & align with all staff | 74% | 77% |
| | | Identify agreement flexibility is meeting individual needs | 77% | 76% |
| | Staff with Disability | Identify familiarity with FW options & align with all staff | 61% | 69% |
| | | Identify belief FW is actively encouraged & align with all staff | 58% | 56% |
| | | Identify satisfaction with supervisor support & align with all staff | 74% | 67% |
| | | Identify agreement flexibility is meeting individual needs | 77% | 69% |

# IMPACT

**How has removing or reducing the barrier changed the lived experience of staff and the organisation? Does staff feedback suggest that these changes are attributable to your action(s)?**

Extended staff reflection on FW perceptions and experiences was gathered from a trend analysis of open-text surveys responses, focus groups and discussions, and solicited feedback (Table 25 & Table 26).

*Table 25. Flexible Work Impact Surveys, Focus Groups, Discussions & Solicited Feedback, 2020 - 2022*

| Flexible Work Impact Surveys, Focus Groups, Discussions & Solicited Feedback, 2020 – 2022 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Engagement** | | | **Respondents** |
| **Year** | **Title** | **Focus** | ***n*** |
| 2020 | *MyVoice* COVID-19 Check-In Survey | Assess staff workplace experiences & perceptions during COVID-19, including remote work impacts | 2,335 |
| 2020 | NEW Seminar | Invite Network for Emerging Women staff perspectives on benefits and challenges of WfH | 119 |
| 2020 | EDWP FW Narratives | Collate scenarios outlining staff lived experiences of FW | 36 |
| 2021 | Western Cares VC-GEF Project (O'Shea, 2021) | Investigate support needs for parents and carers, including for FW | 17 |
| 2021 | Bold and Inclusive Futures | Co-design FW solutions with university staff | 84 |
| 2021 | SAGE COVID-19 Impact Discussions | Interviews and FGs with staff to assess challenges and opportunities arising from COVID-19 impacts | 25 |
| 2022 | Pulse #3: Flexible Work Survey | All-staff organisational survey, with dedicated FW focus | 1,210 |

*Table 26. Respondent Diversity for Impact Surveys, 2020 & 2022*

| Staff Diversity in Impact Responses, 2020 – 2022 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | **Number of Responses (*n*) by Cohort** | | | | | | | | | |
| **Survey** | **WSU** | **F** | **M** | **X** | **Prof** | **Aca** | **Parent** | **Carer** | **Indigenous** | **CALD** | **W Disability** |
| *MyVoice COVID-19 Check-In* | 2,335 | 1,320 | 775 | 11 | 1,374 | 784 | 1,109 | 513 | 54 | 1,659 | 99 |
| Pulse #3: Flexible Work | 1,210 | 784 | 330 | 7 | 807 | 391 | 467 | 226 | 37 | 393 | 193 |

## Key Themes Emerging from Impact Data

Staff gave compelling evidence that FW practice improvements are having effect (Table 27). Across evaluations, staff (including supervisors) appreciated increased access to and normalisation of FW options (especially remote work), recognised increased structural and individual FW supports, and observed a more supportive and adaptive FW environment.

*Table 27. Expanded Staff Reflection on Flexible Work Practice Improvements*

| Staff Reflections on Flexible Work Practice Improvements | |
|---|---|
| **Theme** | **Sample Feedback** |
| Recognition of Improving FW Culture | *I think that notion of presenteeism has really dissolved and we're lucky in the university sector to have this formalised sort of flexible working arrangements.* |
| | *[I have] realise[d] that you can integrate work and a life balance as being a parent better, I think. I think the university's always been very, very flexible and very great, one of the best places have worked in terms of that, but I think it really brought forward that, you know, it can be done and women can do it if we have the right workplace in the right infrastructure and the right managers and things behind us.* |
| | *That's a big conversation in the disability community at the moment. How many of us have been trying to get [these kinds of] flexible working conditions for decades with the like technology and infrastructure being available for decades.* |
| | *Good leadership at VC and Dean level – results match the quality of the people who direct us – excellent.* |
| | *I am pleased to see that the university has finally set up temporary drop-in work places on different campuses. It would be good to see this extended to all campuses.* |
| | *I just want flexibility. I want to be able to do my work in a way that allows me to do it well, but also allows me to manage, you know, my other responsibilities and my life. And yeah, that's really come through.* |

Parents drew clear connections between FW access and their retention and progression (Table 28). While leave entitlements felt to be essential for responding to episodic caring responsibilities, parents reported that individualised combinations of hybrid remote work, phased return to work, and/or flexible hours enabled better overall management of work and caring commitments, including at times of high or complex care needs.

*Table 28. Expanded Parents Reflection on Flexible Work Benefits*

| Parent Reflections on Flexible Work Benefits | |
|---|---|
| **Theme** | **Sample Feedback** |
| Managing Caring Responsibilities through FW Increases Staff Retention and Progression | *For me, gender equality initiatives at Western have meant that I have been able to transition back to work after having children and I can better manager the struggle to juggle work/life balance. I can't say it's been easy, but without these options my life might have gone down a different (and less fortunate) path!* |
| | *I have four young kids and could not have progressed in my career over these years without the flexible working arrangements and support offered here at Western Sydney. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to do the important work we do here at WSU and also stay engaged with my family* |
| | *Flexible working hours and the capacity to work from home are absolutely essential to my capacity to be present for my child and to perform my caring role. […] I balance my hours and my time on campus so that I can fulfil both sets of responsibilities. The capacity to do this is something that I value in my job.* |
| | *I feel fortunate to have a job in which I am reasonably independent and have flexibility in my day to day schedule. I have therefore been able to maintain high quality work alongside my family caring responsibilities* |

<u>Staff felt the RW-Pilot hybrid model was effective at supporting mixed-modes of working and enhanced wellbeing</u> (Table 29). FW was seen to be most effective when the two-part relationship of supervisor trust and staff accountability is mutually recognised, when FW arrangements are responsive to staff needs, when work schedules are planned and transparent, and when supervisors value productivity and task delivery over presenteeism and time-keeping.

Overall, FW changes saw benefits for individuals and the organisation, including:

- reduced commute times;
- better health and wellbeing;
- greater capacity to focus on complex tasks;
- increased job satisfaction, and;
- overall work/life balance.

More particularly, staff identified that personal and work FW benefits are often co-constitutive, where:

- greater flexibility affords more autonomy over both work and home lives;
- improved wellbeing gives rise to greater productivity;
- increased capacity to manage caring responsibilities advances parent/carer job satisfaction, career progression and work/life balance;
- lessened commutes offer more time for personal priorities, improve health outcomes and increase productivity;
- tailored flexibility enables staff with disability to perform at full capacity.

*Table 29. Expanded Staff Reflection on Remote Work Pilot*

| Staff Reflections on Relaying Benefits of Hybrid Remote Work Pilot | |
| --- | --- |
| Theme | Sample Feedback |
| Hybrid RW Model is Working | *For me the flexibility to work at home was never an option, and now it is, and I love it.* |
| | *I was skeptical as to having people work at home for five days a week. But I've kind of been proven wrong during the pandemic. It obviously can work for a lot of people.* |
| | *Hybrid [is] ideal for me. allowing time to interact with others but also time to get stuck into complicated work that I need minimal distractions to complete.* |
| | *I like the hybrid idea. I love the flexibility of working from home but also crave more human contact so a split between home and campus is great.* |
| | *A hybrid mix of working at home and being on campus is great. The best of both worlds!* |
| | *I do like going into the office but going in five days a week is mentally and physically draining, but then also working from home five days a week is quite isolating. So, it's [about] finding a balance.* |
| | *[Remote work] was a win-win for us and our family. Have internet, can work anywhere! I am thankful for this support.* |
| Remote Work has Personal and Work Benefits, with Greater Wellbeing Giving Rise to Improved Productivity | *I am most definitely more productive [at home] as the time spent on travel is prioritised towards completing more tasks daily. I am less overwhelmed/stressed, which contributes to my overall productivity and wellbeing. I am more at ease and so I strive to complete more work, with the desire to contribute even more than I am expected* |
| | *I am a male mid-career academic, with substantial research and HDR student supervision responsibilities. Working from home has helped to save the time used for the commute. I am having better meals and it has been more relaxing for me. Overall, [...]. I can still progress both professionally and personally at roughly the same speed.* |
| | *[I now have] greater availability for meetings, especially early and late meetings, that would normally clash with travel and family care and preparations.* |
| | *All of our work can be done as effectively from home and I'm able to focus more* |
| | *Time consuming paperwork can [now] be completed as I trade on-campus activities for tasks that can be completed remotely.* |

To inform ongoing RW-Pilot embedment, staff indicated highest priority reasons for working remotely (Figure 42, Figure 43 & Table 30). Work/life balance, focused work and 'other reasons' were highest rated, with some clear trends by cohort. Professionals, parents and Indigenous staff most valued work/life balance, while academics prioritised focused work and staff with disability highlighted the utility of remote work for managing chronic health conditions and/or disabilities.
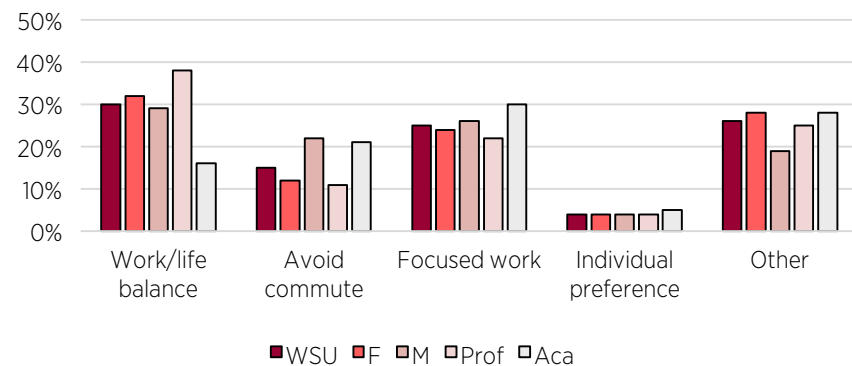
Figure 42. WSU Staff Primary Reasons to Work from Home by Gender and Employment Type, FW Pulse, 2022.

Key Findings: Only minor differences were visible by gender, with clear trends across employment type. Males and academics were more concerned to reduce commutes than females or professionals. Academics were more likely to nominate focused work over work/life balance as a primary reason for working remotely.
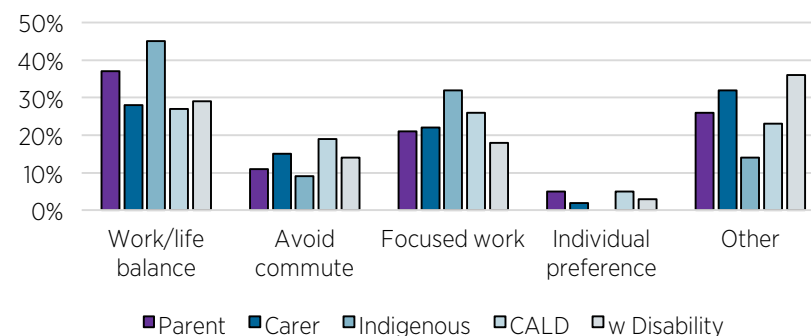


Figure 43. Parents & Key Diversity Cohorts Primary Reasons to Work from Home, FW Pulse, 2022.

Key Findings: CALD staff showed no differentiations from the broader cohort, but Indigenous staff were significantly more likely to attribute priority to work/life balance and focused work. Carers were less likely than parents to nominate work/life balance. Staff with disability were most likely to nominate 'other' reasons, as tabulated at Table 38.

Table 30. Other Reasons for Working from Home by Cohort and Priority, FW Pulse, 2022

| Other Reasons for Working from Home by Cohort and Priority | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Professional Staff | Academic Staff | Parents | Carers | Indigenous Staff | CALD Staff | Staff with Disability |
| All/most priorities listed | All/most priorities listed | All/most priorities listed | Other reasons | All/most priorities listed | All/most priorities listed | Managing chronic health or disability |
| Care commitments | Better work environment | Care commitments | All/most priorities listed | Other reasons | Other reasons | All/most priorities listed |
| Other reasons | Other reasons | Other reasons | Care commitments | | Care commitments | Medical treatments / appointments |
| General health/wellbeing | Care commitments | General health/wellbeing | General health/wellbeing | | General health/wellbeing | Other reasons |
| Better work environment | General health/wellbeing | Reducing childcare costs | Avoiding COVID-19 infection | | | Avoiding COVID-19 infection |
| | | Environmental responsibility | | | | General health/wellbeing |

Moving forward, staff were interested to ensure WfHAs remain adjustable to arising staff needs. While some desired even greater work from home allowances, much feedback warned of the risks of excessive remote work (Table 31) including:

- social isolation and collegial disconnection;
- blurred boundaries between work and home;
- overwork, and;
- inconsistent access to remote work due to work function and/or the varying suitability of home-work environments.

This underscores the importance of embedding hybrid remote work within a versatile suite of FW options, adaptable to individual circumstances.

*Table 31. Expanded Staff Reflection on Risks of Excessive Remote Work*

| Staff Reflections on Risks of Excessive Remote Work | |
|---|---|
| **Theme** | **Sample Feedback** |
| Social Isolation and Collegial Disconnection | *The thing I find frustrating is not being as engaged with my team as I am when I work on campus. In particular, I have a lot of sessional academics who coordinate and/or teach. When I am on campus I am better able to maintain a relationship and they are more likely to share their concerns.* |
| | *I'm actually finding this the biggest challenge of being away from the office. I miss the social interaction with colleagues and didn't fully appreciate how important that was* |
| Working from Home Can Blur Work/Home Boundaries | *I do like the flexibility of being able to transition between work/home quickly. But I think that means we need to be extra mindful of our boundaries between work and home life - they can bleed together if we're not careful* |
| | *If we don't have a clear working routine, it can be easy to keep working, and working, and working! Some of us need to be more regimented, and need to 'end' the day to avoid overworking* |
| | *Three staff members who work flexibly, and who have children across a wide age range, reported that working from home blurred the boundaries between work and home - such that work invaded family time/space, and staff feel like they constantly at work. This occurred primarily because staff members do not have access to an adequate private work space.* |
| Exchanging Flexibility for More Work | *I sometimes feel a bit guilty because I am lucky enough to still be working full time from home and enjoying the flexibility of doing so. Somehow the flip side of that in my mind means I should be available to work anytime if something comes up.* |
| | *Working from home has mostly been a very positive experience, primarily from a travel perspective, cutting out 3 ½ -4 hours of driving to work and back each day. I am more than happy to be home and for this to continue. However […] I am working many more hours, including evenings and weekends.* |
| Remote Work is Not Viable for All | *My preference is to work from my office, as I have my resources readily available. Citrix is cumbersome and does not allow an easy transference of information between the different storage domains. While I appreciate the option to work from home, particularly for marking, [it also] costs me more with increased electrical use, paying for paper & ink for printing and ensuring that I have appropriate office equipment* |
| | *Generally, I don't enjoy working from home. Online teaching is very difficult, especially re: censoring sensitive scientific learning materials* |

Staff also recognised ongoing challenges requiring continuous improvement (Table 32):

- varying supervisor capacity to manage hybrid remote/on-campus teams;
- inconsistent messaging from managers/supervisors, with potential to impact FW access and uptake;
- time-sensitive calendars can resist flexibility for academic parents, with some circumstances exacerbated when family relationships extend internationally.

Some findings regarding part-time or Phased Return to Work require attention beyond FW (see Referred Action 1, below).

*Table 32. Expanded Staff Reflection on Ongoing FW Challenges*

| Staff Reflections on Ongoing Challenges for Flexible Work | |
|---|---|
| **Theme** | **Sample Feedback** |
| Supervisor Inconsistency | *[There is] uneven recognition of caring responsibilities… Do some children matter more than others?* |
| | *If one's manager or Dean is not attuned to the issue of caring, then there is not much that can be done about it. How it is possible to change such a top down structure? As a sole carer, I have found it dispiriting and patronizing reaching out to my School for support."* |
| | *It does appear there is inconsistency across the university with flexibility* |
| Limitations of Flexible Work for Time-Sensitive Academic Calendars | *While the times in which I did my work are flexible, the nature of academic work is not flexible.* |
| | *Flexible work policy and practice needs to recognise that when staff/students are from CALD backgrounds they may live in Australia but their ties and obligations are [both] here and in their home country. This means flexible work practices including leave to look after family overseas without constraining them because 'semester is in session'.* |
| | *We can build a certain amount of flexibility, but classes remain scheduled at specific times. The needs of those we care for take second place to that.* |
| | *I expect to be providing care to my child for a few years yet. I am considering returning to a professional role (instead of academic one) because in my experience that work is less time-dependent.* |
| Issues Around Part-Time or Phased Return to Work Can Inhibit Academic Career Progression | *Overall, nobody takes into consideration that you work part-time. I am expected to have the same research output as someone who works full-time. As this is not possible, I see my research allocation slowly going down with my teaching allocation slowly going up every year. This is a dangerous slide.* |
| | *The most challenging aspect of returning to work after parental leave (which continues to pose an issue today) are the unwritten expectations around academic performance, which are largely incompatible with care responsibilities.* |
| | *When you no longer have those 'extra' hours to draw down on your career gets really knocked around by both planned and unplanned demands from both the university and your family.* |
| | *I can categorically say that the disruptions to my career posed by maternity leave, have not magically resolved over the course of a few years. My responsibilities as a carer continue to impact my research trajectory.* |

# FURTHER ACTION: FLEXIBLE WORK

| REF. | RATIONALE | ACTIONS & OUTPUTS | TIMEFRAME | RESPONSIBILITY | ACCOUNTABILITY | SUCCESS INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Continued monitoring of FW uptake and staff experience data is essential for ensuring equitable access to FW benefits for all staff and for target cohorts. | Continue to **monitor FW uptake and access**, including via targeted **FW Check-In Surveys** with intersectional focus (as per *GE-SAP 2021–2026*). | 2024, biannually thereafter | OPC | Chief People Officer | FW uptake is tracked and monitored, with access or satisfaction imbalances by cohort (± >5%) mitigated as relevant. |
| 2. | Feedback suggests the RW-Pilot has been successful, with formal processes and widespread promotion of Work from Home Agreements having particular benefit for target cohorts, especially professionals, males, male parents, Indigenous staff. New CALD staff benchmarks also indicate satisfaction at parity with broader cohort. | **Formally review, refine and embed RW-Pilot as ongoing practice**. Update and re-circulate *Flexibility Matters Toolkit* to supervisors and staff, as relevant. | 2023 – 2024 | OPC | Chief People Officer | Positivity around FW meeting individual needs is retained at minimum 75% (± <5%) for all staff, with parity sustained for male parents, Indigenous staff and CALD staff. |
| 3. | Maturing FW practice requires supervisor/manager focus on consistent implementation of FW policy, advanced education on FW success factors, and an emphasis on supervisor/staff member partnership in FW arrangements. | Implement **FW Management Workshops** to build capability for supervisors/managers:<br>▪ Utilising FW as an essential workplace tool for gender equity, diversity and inclusion;<br>▪ Managing FW conversations;<br>▪ Understanding the flexibility needs of carers;<br>▪ Proactively managing flexibility for staff with disability. | 2024 and onwards | OPC | Chief People Officer | FW is understood as an essential workplace tool, with clarity around supervisor/staff expectations and need for compromise. Staff positivity around supervisor support and FW meeting individual needs is retained at minimum 75% (± <5%), with gaps eliminated for carers and staff with disability. |
| 4. | Sustaining FW improvements requires regular and ongoing communication and engagement with staff, with proactive leadership commitment to supporting workplace flexibility. | **Embed FW conversations as key components of existing work processes**, including:<br>▪ On-boarding for new staff<br>▪ Annual position reviews (Work Planning and Career Development) | 2024 and onwards | OPC | Chief People Officer | Staff positivity around FW familiarity and FW meeting individual needs is retained at minimum 75% (± <5%); belief in FW encouragement raises to alignment with other prompts, to minimum 75% (± <5%). |

| REF. | RATIONALE | ACTIONS & OUTPUTS | TIMEFRAME | RESPONSIBILITY | ACCOUNTABILITY | SUCCESS INDICATORS |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 5. | Outcomes and Impact data indicate that recent focus on remote work has been an important lever for raising familiarity and engagement with FW, but also suggest that elevating the promotion of other forms of FW is likely to have benefits for all staff and for target cohorts (including for prospective staff). Demonstrable leadership role modelling of a diversity of FW practices also has potential to permeate all levels of University culture, reinforcing rising staff perceptions that FW is actively encouraged. | a. **Document exemplars of Senior Leaders accessing a range of flexible work options** within *Flexibility Matters Toolkit,* relevant webpages and other materials;<br><br>b. Release *Flexibility Matters* video and recirculate *Flexibility Matters Toolkit* in conjunction with Actions 3 (Workshops) and 4 (On-boarding and Position Reviews), with emphasis on diversity of FW options and benefits. | 2024 and onwards | OPC | Chief People Officer | Staff familiarity with full breadth of FW options is demonstrable, including for new recruits;<br><br>Belief in FW encouragement raises to alignment with other FW prompts, to minimum 75% (± <5%). |
| 6. | Indigenous staff improvements are clearly visible, with only one prompt below target. Further investigation is needed to identify, embed and sustain specific FW benefits for Indigenous staff. | Include FW enquiry within **Indigenous Staff Conference** discussions and **SAGE Indigenous Staff Cygnet Impact Assessment** and implement recommendations. | 2023 – 2024 | ODVC-IL and SAGE Indigenous Staff SWAG | DVC-IL and SAGE Academic Lead | Indigenous staff satisfaction is at parity with broader staff cohort, sustained at minimum 75% (± >5%) across all prompts. |
| 7. | Carers are generally positive about FW but report somewhat lower positivity that individual needs are met. | Include FW enquiry within C**arers-focused VC GE Fund project** and implement recommendations. | 2024 | SAGE Parents & Carers SWAG | SAGE Academic Lead | Align carers satisfaction with FW meeting individual needs with all staff minimum 75% (± >5%). |
| 8. | Despite similar rates of access to formal Work from Home Agreements, staff with disability report somewhat lower satisfaction with supervisor support and individual needs met. | **Embed disability awareness as key component of all FW messaging**, including in policy, manager/supervisor workshops, toolkits and promotional materials. | 2024 | OPC | Chief People Officer | Align staff with disability satisfaction with supervisor support and FW meeting needs with all staff with all staff minimum 75% (± >5%). |
| 9. | To complement ongoing data monitoring, a mid-point evaluation to FW progress against ongoing objectives is required. | **Intersectional mid-point study** into staff familiarity with WSU's breadth of FW options, workshop/training efficacy, gender-equitable FW access, and supervisor attitudes toward FW. | 2026, in conjunction with FW Check-in Survey | OPC and EDWP Divisions | Chief People Officer | Ongoing barriers to successful FW implementation are identified and addressed. |

| REFERRED ACTIONS | | | | | | |
|------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| REF. | RATIONALE | ACTIONS & OUTPUTS | TIMEFRAME | RESPONSIBILITY | ACCOUNTABILITY | SUCCESS INDICATORS |
| 1. | Some academic parents report continued pressures at return to work after Parental Leave that require further response. Particular concerns were raised around the ongoing impacts of career interruption, difficulty protecting part-time workloads, limited time for research, inconsistency of Dean/supervisor understanding of caring pressures, and correlating effects on career progression. | Parents and Carers SWAG to review and incorporate into Cygnet Objectives. | 2023 | SAGE Parents & Carers SWAG | SAGE Academic Lead | TBC |