SAGE Cygnet Awards
Cygnet Award # 4 – Flexible work and Career Breaks

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Acknowledgement of Country

Griffith University acknowledges the people who are the traditional custodians of the land and pays respect to the Elders, past and present, and extends that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Griffith University's campuses are based on the lands of the Yugarabul, Yuggera, Jagera, Turrbal, Yugambeh and Kombumerri peoples.

CONTENTS

GLOSSARY

AU/NZ University benchmarks	Australian and New Zealand University benchmarks in the Employee Engagement Survey
ARO	Achievement Relative to Opportunity
AS	Athena Swan
BM	Benchmark
DVC R	Deputy Vice Chancellor Research
EES	Employee Engagement Survey
GU	Griffith University
Flexible Work Year	Also called the 48/52 arrangement or purchased leave
Reversible Part-Time Appointment	A change in hours for the purpose of the care of dependants

SAGE Cygnet Award Details

Griffith University: SAGE CYGNET # 4

Word limit – 2500 words (excluding the institutional context and excluding the action plan)

	Current Cygnet	**Barrier** · List the Barrier addressed in this Cygnet · List the Barrier for Cygnets already submitted
[Mandatory] Institution-wide barrier	√	Workplace flexibility and career breaks
[Mandatory] Sub-group barrier		Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ staff and students
Sub-group barrier		Attraction and recruitment of women in the Sciences Group
Sub-group barrier		First Peoples Employment
[Please select] Institution-wide/Sub-group barrier		

CYGNET AWARD: WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY AND CAREER BREAKS

Key Barrier and Evidence of Barrier

This Cygnet Award addresses workplace flexibility and career breaks at Griffith University. Workplace flexibility is a key enabler of attracting and retaining staff, particularly women, staff with caring responsibilities and other underrepresented groups in the workforce.

A 2017 Athena Swan Survey revealed that only 63% academic and 69% professional staff felt like they had the flexibility they needed to manage work and other commitments. Staff were asked whether they had requested a change of work arrangements to assist with their caring responsibilities. Women were more likely to request a change compared to men.

Limitations to current entitlements

The 2017 survey results revealed areas of our parental leave policy which could be improved. For example, some staff viewed the parental leave policy surrounding the minimum amount of time a person must be employed by the University before paid parental leave as unjust - "*planning for pregnancy is difficult and cannot be timed according to a university schedule*". This was also seen as a potential barrier to talent attraction. At the 2018 Senior Staff Conference, participants recommended that Parental Leave entitlements should be gender neutral to encourage equal responsibility for parenting arrangements, increasing the likelihood of men accessing longer Paid Parental Leave.

Visibility of flexible work

Informal feedback from new staff suggested that when applying for a role at Griffith, it was unclear what flexible work options were available. A review of the website showed that there was no accessible and consistent centralised location for this information, particularly for external prospective candidates. During COVID-19 lockdown periods, opportunities were identified to increase awareness of flexible work options.

Consistent approach to working from home

Across 2020-2021, the university distributed surveys that address issues related to impacts of COVID-19, including items relating to flexibility and working from home. Staff cited benefits to flexible work including increased job satisfaction, productivity, improved work life balance, reduced commute time, more time and capacity to meet family and caring commitments and a more accessible work environment for staff with a disability. Within this survey, 358 comments expressed interest in further working from home or flexible work arrangements.

Other themes that came out of these surveys included:

- Guidance was needed on the University's stance and expectations around remote work.
- Inconsistent messaging or access to work from home arrangements.
- Difficulties around the facilities available to manage work from home (for example, lack of equipment and suitable meeting spaces)
- Unfair distribution of workload across staff working from home and the office.
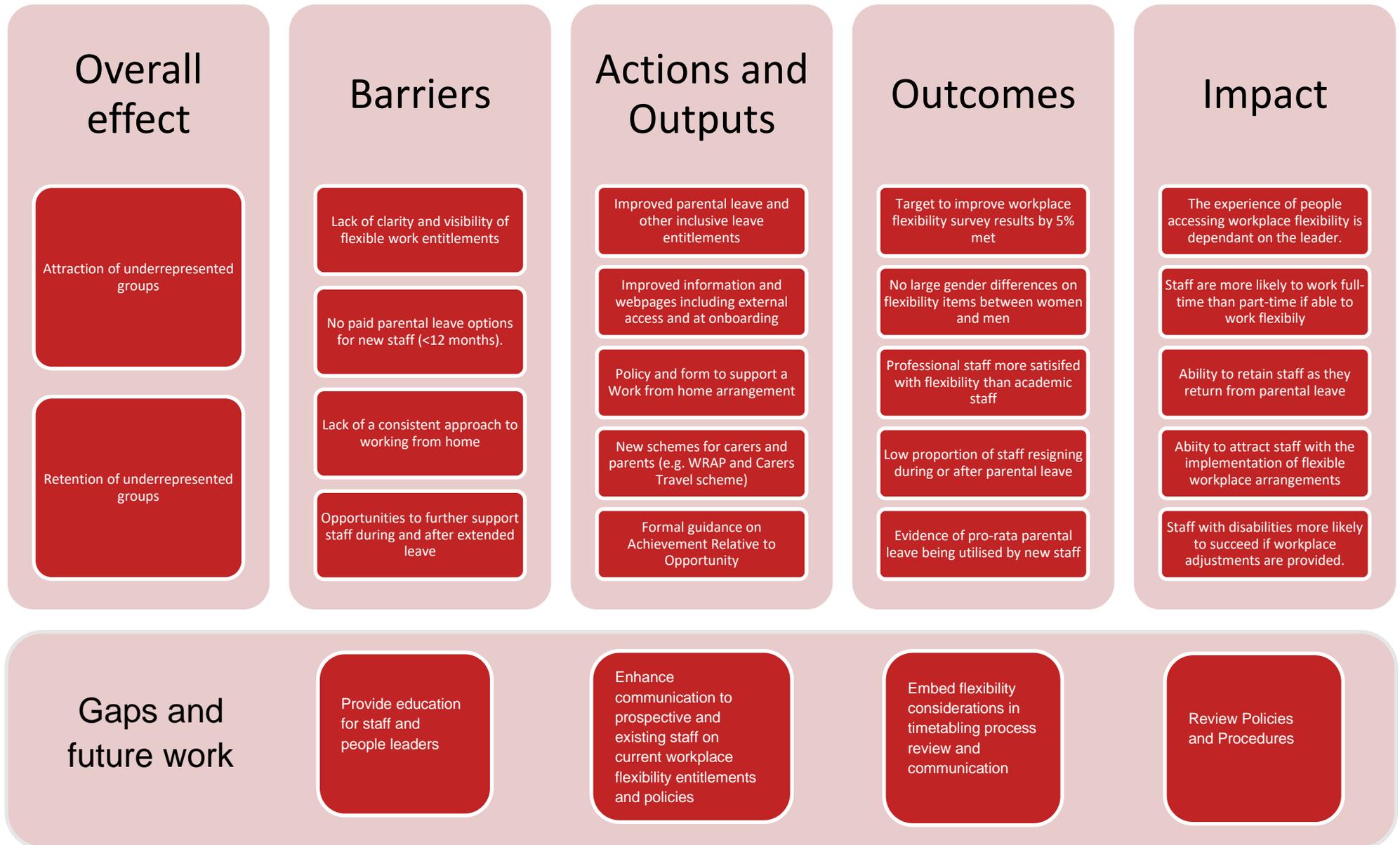
Support during and returning from extended leave

Pre-COVID, AS survey participants believed there needed to be a clearer understanding surrounding the outputs expected by the University for part-time staff, and a realistic agreement on productivity and activities as the person returns from an extended break. Participants also voiced the need for senior staff and the promotion panel to understand that "*it will take some time for some researchers to restore their momentum after returning to full-time work".*

Participants also wanted professional development opportunities after parental leave to maintain competitiveness in the market. Some wanted targeted research support to allow progression of their research endeavours. A review of the uptake of current programs suggested that not all Groups have consistently utilised the available programs, particularly the Academic Equity Development Program which provides development funding for A/B academics who have experienced career disadvantage due to life circumstances.

Informal feedback regarding parenting rooms being insufficient and opportunities to improve the facilities was also provided.

Figure 1: Summary diagram of Cygnet Award on workplace flexibility.

Overall effect

- Attraction of underrepresented groups
- Retention of underrepresented groups

Barriers

- Lack of clarity and visibility of flexible work entitlements
- No paid parental leave options for new staff (<12 months).
- Lack of a consistent approach to working from home
- Opportunities to further support staff during and after extended leave

Actions and Outputs

- Improved parental leave and other inclusive leave entitlements
- Improved information and webpages including external access and at onboarding
- Policy and form to support a Work from home arrangement
- New schemes for carers and parents (e.g. WRAP and Carers Travel scheme)
- Formal guidance on Achievement Relative to Opportunity

Outcomes

- Target to improve workplace flexibility survey results by 5% met
- No large gender differences on flexibility items between women and men
- Professional staff more satisifed with flexibility than academic staff
- Low proportion of staff resigning during or after parental leave
- Evidence of pro-rata parental leave being utilised by new staff

Impact

- The experience of people accessing workplace flexibility is dependant on the leader.
- Staff are more likely to work full-time than part-time if able to work flexibily
- Ability to retain staff as they return from parental leave
- Abiity to attract staff with the implementation of flexible workplace arrangements
- Staff with disabilities more likely to succeed if workplace adjustments are provided.

Gaps and future work

- Provide education for staff and people leaders
- Enhance communication to prospective and existing staff on current workplace flexibility entitlements and policies
- Embed flexibility considerations in timetabling process review and communication
- Review Policies and Procedures

Activities and Outputs

Flexibility entitlements and support

In the 2017-2022 Enterprise Agreements, Griffith introduced pro-rata parental leave for staff with less than 12 months service. This provides a week of paid parental leave for every completed month of service to support new staff. We also expanded our inclusive leave options in the following Enterprise Agreements 2023-2025, including new Gender Affirmation Leave entitlements, gender-neutral language for parental leave and improved Cultural Leave and Family and Domestic Violence Leave offerings. 'Maternity leave' was replaced with 'birth-related leave for a parent who has given birth'. Using a surrogate has been added to adoption clauses.

Table 1: Progress against actions that were included in the Athena Swan Action Plan 2018-2022

Action	Progress
As part of enterprise bargaining, introduce pro-rata paid parental leave for staff with less than 12 months continuous service (one week's paid parental leave for every completed month of service).	**COMPLETED** Included in the previous and current enterprise agreements.
Remove gendered wording from Parental Leave provisions (i.e., maternity leave), and ensure it is clear that all genders can access leave.	**COMPLETED** This was updated in the recent Enterprise Agreements.

Based on feedback that current parenting rooms were not centrally located, breastfeeding and parenting rooms were included in the new Sciences building at Nathan Campus in 2020. In 2021, we reviewed the current parenting facilities which suggested improvements to the accessibility and functionality of these facilities which are being implemented.

Table 2: Progress against actions that were included in the Athena Swan Action Plan 2018-2022

Action	Progress
Add two facilities (breastfeeding and parenting rooms) to the plans for the new Sciences building at Nathan Campus.	**COMPLETED** These were included in the new N79 building.

Information and clarity on flexible work

Griffith improved communication on workplace flexibility by reviewing webpages and resources. This included an update to internal Pay, Conditions and Benefits webpages and development of a Workplace Flexibility webpage in 2019. In 2024, the revised Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy also included a section on workplace flexibility. Information on flexible work was included in Manager and Employee onboarding checklists to support discussions with new staff.

The extended leave toolkit was reviewed, ensuring improved clarity around entitlements and leave provisions. This was added to all Parental Leave application forms.

Flexible Working information was included into the Manager Essentials: Workplace Relations module. This provides managers an overview of legislative requirements, information on relevant policies and the Enterprise Agreement as well as resources on how to support employees with flexible working.

> " We recognise that flexibility is a key enabler of staff and student equity and inclusion and facilitates attraction, progression, and engagement. The University additionally adheres to its legislative obligations regarding workplace flexibility including flexibility for people who are breastfeeding and expressing and have family and carer responsibilities. The University offers work-from-home flexibility through the Work Location Policy. (Griffith University Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Policy)

Flexibility - Working from home request

Edwina has a team member, Joe, who has worked with her for the last 3 years. Joe had an initial informal conversation with Edwina last week to discuss putting in a request to work from home three days a week to be in the same location as his elderly father. His father doesn't need a high degree of care at this point, however they would both feel better about him being at home if something unexpected happened. Joe has now put the request in writing via the Work Location Request tile to formalise it.

Edwina has some questions that immediately come to mind.
Use the accordion drop downs to find the answers to her questions

▸ Does Griffith have anything in our Enterprise Agreements or Policy Library that would inform my decision?

▸ Are there legislative requirements I need to understand before I make a decision?

▸ I've never dealt with this before - who can help me?

Action	Progress
Ensure information for prospective candidates includes workplace flexibility information on the Griffith Pay, Conditions and Benefits website.	**COMPLETED** The website has been updated.
To ensure all staff and supervisors are aware of Parental Leave and flexible working arrangements, the equity, diversity and inclusion website and communications will be reviewed. We will implement automated communication to supervisors and employees when the employee applies for parental leave setting out our "Keeping in Touch" program, leave entitlements, and options upon returning to work.	**COMPLETED** A link to the Extended Leave toolkit was included in Parental Leave application forms.
Update our website and consolidate flexibility conditions into one policy to enhance clarity and communication of benefits for university staff	**COMPLETED** A new Workplace Flexibility webpage was developed in 2019.

Work from home arrangements

In response to COVID-19 survey, Griffith developed a Work Location policy, providing clarity on working from home arrangements. The policy includes:

- A stance on the preferred work from home (40%) / campus frequency (60%) in standard circumstances
- Work design considerations such as inherent requirements of the role, business continuity and the operational needs of team and individual
- A commitment to prioritising equipment that is suitable for work from home arrangements (for example, laptops and improved meeting room technology)
- A mechanism for reviewing a work from home decision with the Head of Element and
- Health and safety and Fair Work obligations.

In 2022, the Work from Home checklist was converted into an online form. A dashboard was developed so leaders can meet their health and safety and Fair Work obligations and understand arrangements in their area.

From 2020, several meeting rooms were upgraded to be Teams-enabled. In 2024, a new collaboration office space was piloted at Nathan Campus which included technology to support hybrid working such as Teams 'pods' to support online meetings.

Maintaining momentum when returning to work

Griffith took advantage of the Women Research Assistance Program to support women returning from parental leave. This program provided a co-funding arrangement with the Queensland Government for another researcher or assistant to continue research during or after leave. The Government scheme was discontinued in 2022 and replaced with a local scheme available to any staff member on extended Parental Leave in 2023.

A Carers Travel Scheme was established in Health and Sciences Group to fund any out-of-pocket childcare costs incurred while researchers undertake external development opportunities, for example, presenting at a conference.

Action	Progress
Promote the Academic Equity Development Program directly to women in STEMM with the goal of at least two per year take-up in the Sciences and Health Group.	**IN PROGRESS / ONGOING** The program was promoted and continued in both groups with varied uptake. The AEDP is currently being reviewed for opportunities to improve uptake and simplify the administration process.
Introduce the *Griffith STEMM Academic Carer Support Fund* comprising: • **Parental Leave support**: funding for another researcher, or a research/laboratory assistant to progress research whilst the primary researcher is on parental leave, or to assist the primary researcher following parental leave (up to $25,000); • **Carer funding:** funding to cover any out-of-pocket childcare or respite care costs incurred while the researcher is presenting at a national/international conference, sitting on a professional research committee or attending professional development or other important Griffith activity (up to $1,000).	**COMPLETED / ONGOING** Parental Leave support: Between 2019-2021 Griffith took advantage of the Queensland Government Women Research Assistance Program. In 2022, when this was discontinued, the GU DVCR office introduced a new scheme for any staff member on extended Parental Leave. Carer funding: This was established in the Health and Sciences Group. It was put on hold in 2020-2021, however, has now been reestablished in both areas.

The Achievement Relative to Opportunity (ARO) Guideline was developed to ensure the evaluation of a person's achievements based on the opportunities that have been available to them. This can be applied in situations including significant career interruptions (for example, parental leave) or periods of part-time employment and other flexible working arrangements, particularly to accommodate carer responsibilities. We also updated the 2023-2025 Enterprise Agreements so that some part-time workers are only required to meet the performance standards of two work profile types (out of service, teaching and researching) rather than three in recognition of ARO.

Action	Progress
(As part of the new Enterprise Agreement, yet to be ratified) ensure all fixed-term staff regardless of their term of engagement will be automatically on full superannuation entitlements (proposed for implementation 2020).	**COMPLETED** This was included in the previous and current Enterprise Agreements.
Develop a Performance Relative to Opportunity Guideline for use in recruitment and selection, promotions and performance reviews.	**COMPLETED** Achievement Relative to Opportunity Guideline developed in 2020.

Outcomes

Flexibility targets

The Athena Swan (AS) Bronze Action Plan 2018-2022 outlined a target to: *"achieve a 5% increase in positive response for the survey question – I have the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments including caring responsibilities".* This was the primary target to determine improvements to staff attitudes on flexible work. This target was *exceeded for both academic (+6%) and professional staff cohorts (+10%) by 2022 and* maintained in 2023. There was a slight drop in 2024 across both academic and professional staff. In 2024, responses dropped across most survey categories which was influenced by significant organisational change due to restrictive financial conditions. We will continue to monitor this trend to minimise long-term impact.

Table 3: Percentage favourable in response to flexibility questions in the Athena Swan Survey, 2017 and Employee Engagement Survey by staff type, 2021-2024

	2017 Athena Swan Survey (% favourable)		2021-2024 Employee Engagement Survey (% favourable)				
	Question	2017	Question	2021	2022	2023	2024
Academic	I have the flexibility I need to manage work and other commitments	63%	I have access to the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments	67% (+4%)	69% (+2%)	69% (0%)	65% (-4%)
	BASELINE		TARGET: 68%				
Professional	I have the flexibility I need to manage work and other commitments	69%	I have access to the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments	77% (+8%)	78% (+1%)	79% (+1%)	78% (-1%)
	BASELINE		TARGET: 74%				

Note: Questions differ slightly across the Athena Swan Survey and Employee Engagement Survey. Items highlighted in green indicate where the target was met.

Perceptions on flexibility

Other flexibility items did not align across AS and Employee Engagement surveys (EES); however, a comparison of these items can provide some indication of whether attitudes towards flexibility have improved. The item *"Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs"* had more positive responses than all 2017 flexibility survey items in both academic (+11-14%) and professional staff cohorts (+10-11%). Both academic and professional staff also generally performed close to or above the AU/NZ University benchmarks on this item.

The EES work-life balance item yielded more positive responses than relevant 2017 flexibility items in the professional staff cohort (+5-6%), however, worse responses from academic staff (-12 to -15%). A review of other engagement survey items and other feedback suggests this result could be linked to high workload and timetabling restrictions and is reflected in action five.

Table 4: Percentage favourable in response to flexibility questions in the Athena Swan Survey, 2017 and Employee Engagement Survey by staff type, 2021-2024

	2017 Athena Swan Survey (% favourable)		2021-2024 Employee Engagement Survey (% favourable)								
	Question	2017	Question	2021	BM	2022	BM	2023	BM	2024	BM
Academic	Flexible work arrangements are supported in my Element	66%	Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs	76%	+6% (AUNZ)	78% (+2%)	+6% (AUNZ)	77% (-1%)	+1% (AUNZ)	71%	-6% (AUNZ)
			I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life	50%	+3% (AUNZ)	45% (-5%)	-2% (AUNZ)	51% (+6%)	-7% (AUNZ)	49%	-13% (AUNZ)
BASELINE			**TARGET: 71%**								
Professional	Flexible work arrangements are supported in my Element	68%	Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs	78%	0% (AUNZ)	79% (+1%)	-1% (AUNZ)	79% (0%)	+3% (AUNZ)	77%	0% (AUNZ)
			I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life	69%	-4% (AUNZ)	73% (+4%)	+1% (AUNZ)	74% (+1%)	+10% (AUNZ)	73%	+11% (AUNZ)
BASELINE			**TARGET: 73%**								

Note: Data in brackets under a particular year reflects the change in results in this cohort from previous year. BM = Benchmark, AUNZ = Australian / New Zealand University Benchmark. A positive number in the BM column indicates where Griffith scored higher than the benchmark.

By gender

Limited access to the original data from 2017 AS Survey meant that we were unable to separate the flexibility items by gender. A breakdown of 2021-2023 EES results by gender revealed that responses of women and men on flexibility questions were within 2% of each other suggesting similar experiences. In most cases, both women and men also saw improvements in responses each year. Non-binary employees reported lower satisfaction than women or men, however this improved in 2022 and 2023, and corresponds to broader trends observed in the non-binary staff results which is addressed in action 8. The 2024 drop for non-binary staff aligns with the decrease of engagement for staff at Griffith due to economic conditions.

Table 5: Percentage favourable in response to flexibility questions in the Employee Engagement Survey by gender, 2021-2024

Question	2021			2022			2023			2024		
	Women	Men	Non-binary	Women	Men	Non-binary	Women	Men	Non-binary	Women	Men	Non-binary
Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs	78%	79%	50%	80% (+2%)	81% (+2%)	68% (+18%)	80% (0%)	80% (0%)	73% (+5%)	78% (-2%)	76% (-4%)	54% (-19%)
I maintain a good balance between work and other aspects of my life	61%	62%	30%	64% (+3%)	66% (+4%)	68% (+38%)	67% (+3%)	67% (+1%)	59% (-9%)	67% (0%)	65% (-2%)	38% (-21%)
I have access to the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments	74%	74%	47%	76% (+2%)	77% (+3%)	77% (+30%)	77% (+1%)	79% (+2%)	68% (-8%)	76% (-1%)	76% (-3%)	50% (-18%)
Note: Access to the original data for the Athena Swan and COVID-19 survey data is limited and unavailable by gender.												

By parent / carer status

Only data separated by parents and carers were available in the COVID-19 surveys. The data showed that parents and those without children responded similarly during this time, while responses from carers were notably lower than the other groups. In the post lockdown period (EES: 2021-2024), there were no meaningful differences between those with or without caring responsibilities.

Positive responses to flexibility items in the COVID-19 surveys start high (75-82%) then decreased between May 2020 and February 2021. This is linked closely to lockdown periods as most staff were able to work from home in May 2020. However, were being asked back to campus in end of 2020 and early 2021. Once lockdown restrictions had settled in August 2021, responses had improved drastically (+15-26%) to be close to early COVID-19 times (78-79%).

Table 6: Percentage favourable in response to flexibility questions in the COVID-19 Surveys, 2021 and Employee Engagement Survey, 2021-2024

Question		2020-2021 COVID-19 Survey (% favourable)			2021-2024 Employee Engagement Survey (% favourable)				
		May 2020	Nov 2020	Feb 2021		Aug 2021	Aug 2022	Aug 2023	Aug 2024
Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs.	Parent	81%	73% (-8%)	61% (-12%)	Caring responsibilities	79%	80% (+1%)	79% (-2% from May 2020 and +18% from Feb 2021)	78% (-3% from May 2020 and +17% from Feb 2021)
	Carer	75%	65% (-10%)	53% (-12%)		Parents (+18%) Carer (+26%)		75% (same as May 2020 and +22% from Feb 2021)	72% (-3% from May 2020 and +19% from Feb 2021)
	Not a Parent	82%	71% (-11%)	62% (-9%)	No caring responsibilities	78%	79% (+1%)	80% (+1%)	76% (-4%)
	Not a Carer	82%	74% (-8%)	63% (-11%)		Not a Parent (+16%) Not a Carer (+15%)			

Note: The separation of parents and carer data was not available in 2021 and 2022. The definition of the carer category may also differ slightly across years. In 2023 this category includes carers of children with a disability / medical condition, adults with a disability / medical condition and elderly adults. In the 2020-2021 data this level of detail was not available.

Uptake of flexibility options

Formal Flexible Work Arrangements

Uptake of the flexible work year (also called the 48/52 arrangement or purchased leave) increased between 2018 and 2019. In 2019, 82% of staff taking advantage of this program were women, this proportion dropped in the following two years and remained stable between 71%-74% from 2021 onwards.
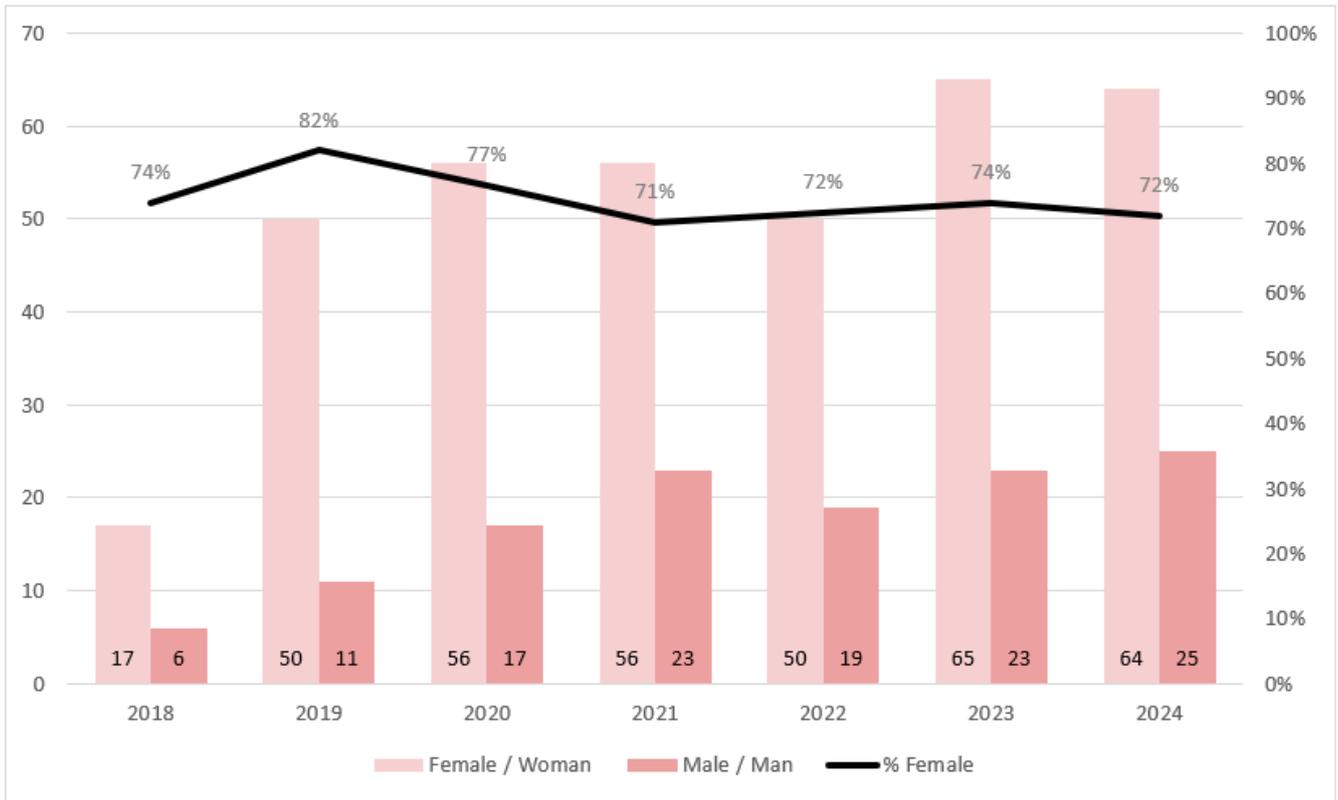
Disclaimer: Definitions for this data are inconsistent/not well-defined, therefore, discrepancies have been found across various data sources. Limitations have been identified in the current methodology; however, these definitions were retained due to consistency in approach across other flexibility datasets.

Figure 2: Flexible Work Year uptake (all staff) by gender, 2018-2024

A slightly higher proportion of women (compared to the cohort of all women) took advantage of the Flexible Work Year compared to men. In 2024, the highest number of employees (n=89) used the scheme (Figure 2) both women and men had the highest proportional uptake of this arrangement in 2020, likely linked with the pandemic lockdowns (Figure 3). Between 2022 and 2024 uptake has remained stable or increased slightly.
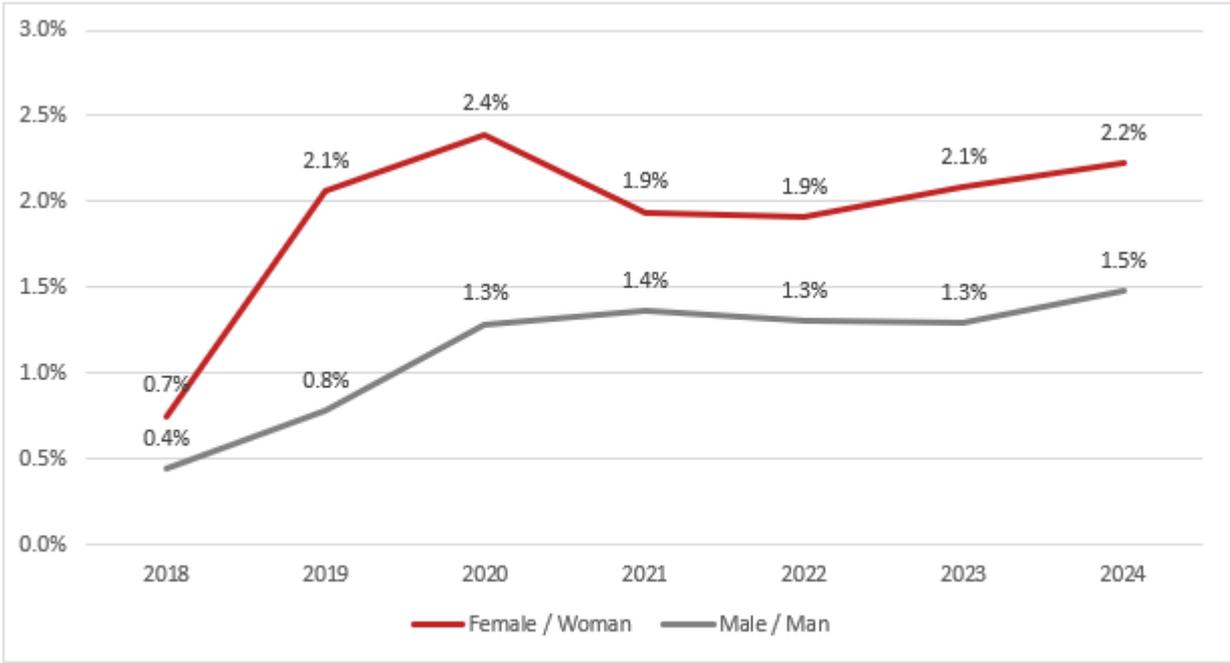
Figure 3: Proportion of cohort uptake - Flexible Work Year (all staff), 2018-2024

Part-Time Appointments

The proportion of staff on part-time contracts decreased for both women (-6%) and men (-3%) from 2020 onwards. This was unpacked further through focus groups (see Impact). Since this data is taken as at the end of March (to align with other reporting), the 2020 data reflect the state before any significant lockdown periods.
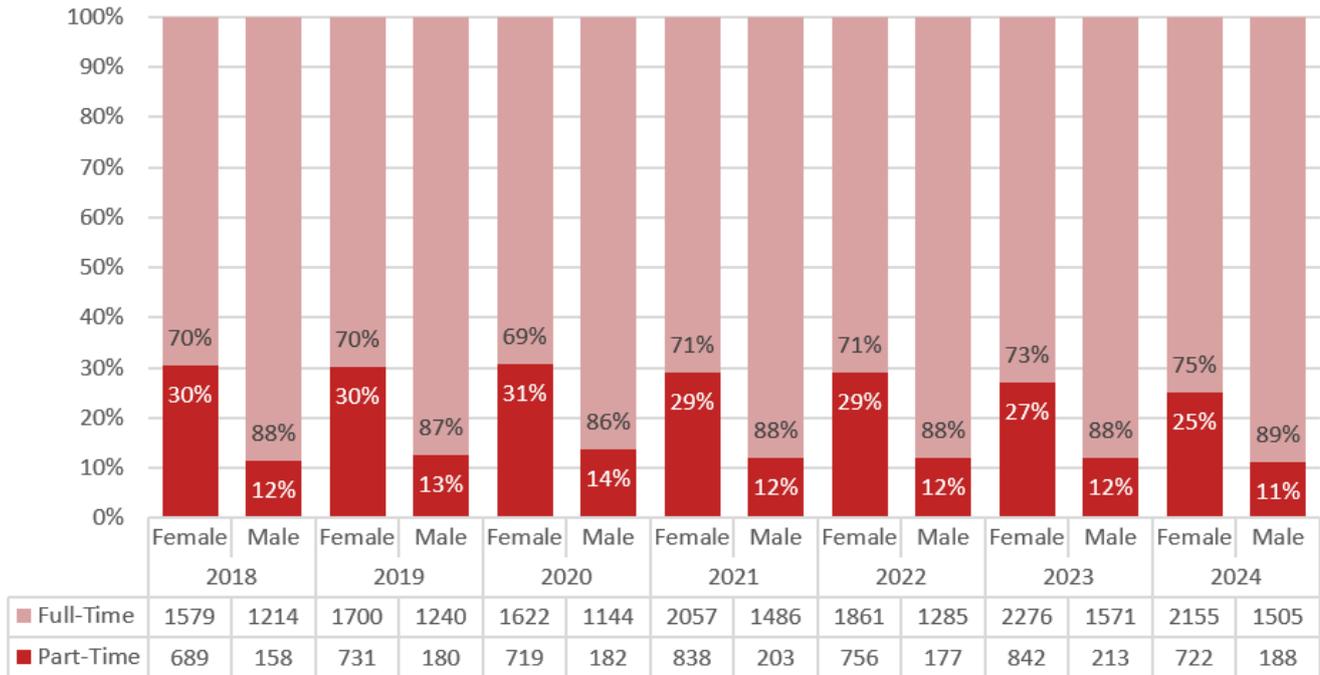

	2018		2019		2020		2021		2022		2023		2024	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Full-Time	1579	1214	1700	1240	1622	1144	2057	1486	1861	1285	2276	1571	2155	1505
Part-Time	689	158	731	180	719	182	838	203	756	177	842	213	722	188

Figure 4: Full-Time / Part-Time status by gender (all staff), 2018-2024

There was a slight decrease in the proportion of academic and professional staff in part-time roles from 2020 onwards, though changes are small. The economic conditions since 2020 have likely impacted the numbers.
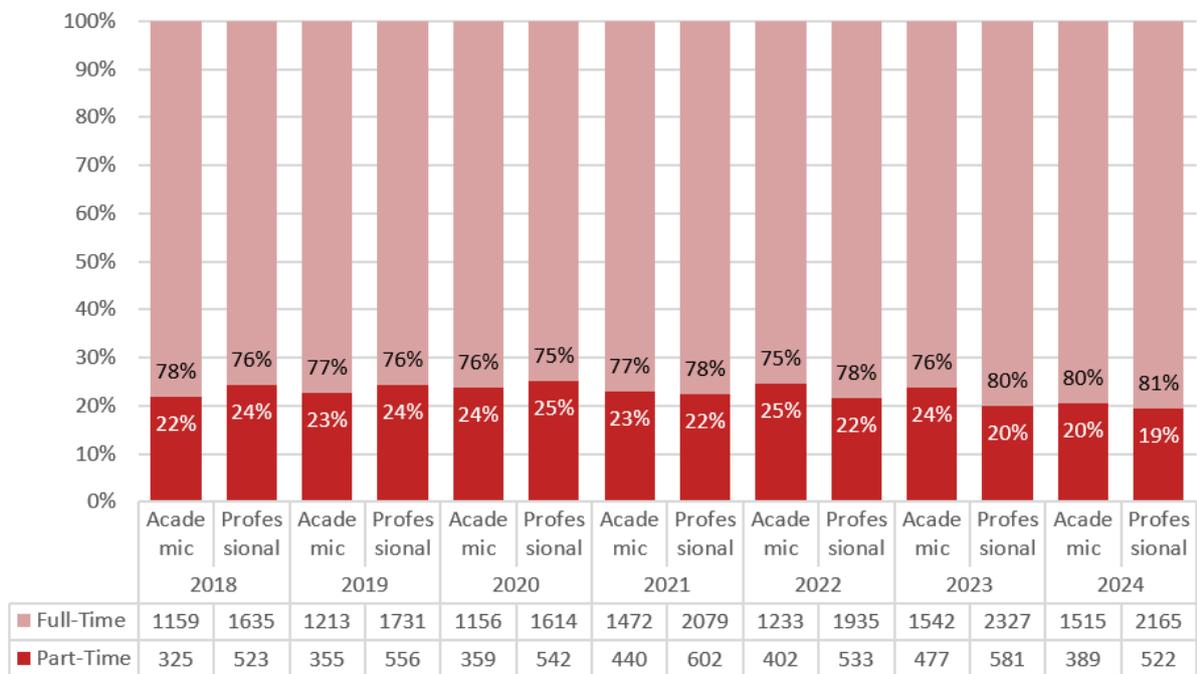

	Academic 2018	Professional 2018	Academic 2019	Professional 2019	Academic 2020	Professional 2020	Academic 2021	Professional 2021	Academic 2022	Professional 2022	Academic 2023	Professional 2023	Academic 2024	Professional 2024
Full-Time	1159	1635	1213	1731	1156	1614	1472	2079	1233	1935	1542	2327	1515	2165
Part-Time	325	523	355	556	359	542	440	602	402	533	477	581	389	522

Figure 5: Full-Time / Part-Time by academic / professional status, 2018-2024

Family and Special Circumstances Leave

Family and Special Circumstances Leave is primarily taken by women, fluctuating between 69%-70% excluding 2019 which was slightly lower (67%). The low uptake in 2018 was impacted by a change in leave categories due to enterprise agreement changes.
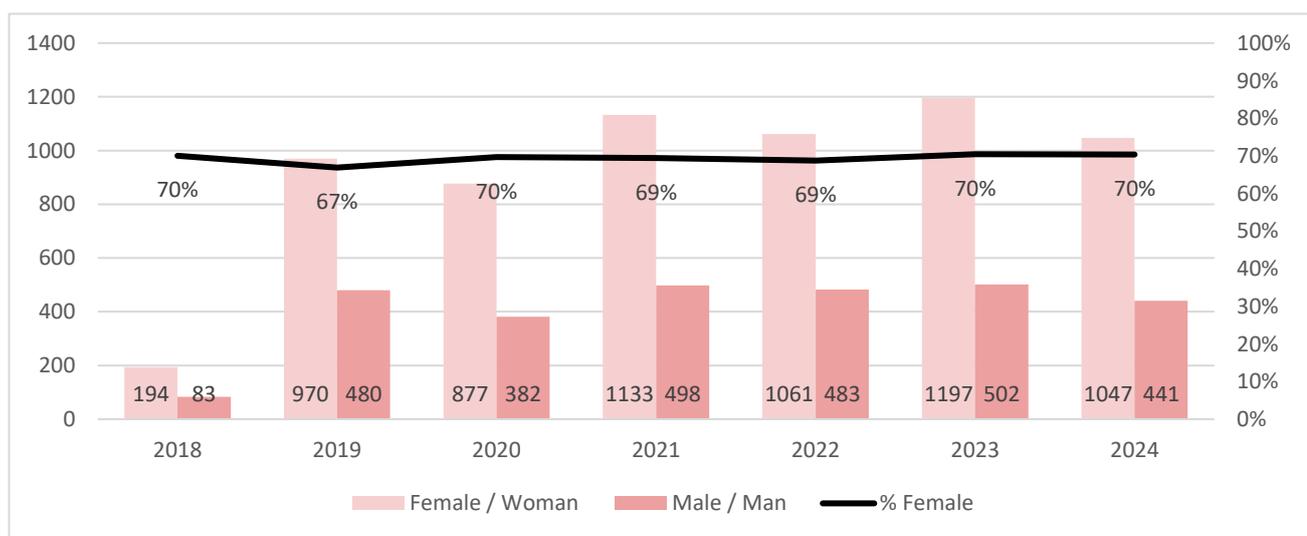

Figure 6: Uptake of Family and Special Circumstance Leave (all staff), 2018-2024

Parental Leave

There were no meaningful changes in the proportions of women and men taking parental or partner leave or resignations while on parental leave. The data in table 8 suggests that in recent years about 5-10% of staff taking paid parental leave have commenced at Griffith within the first year therefore will have benefited from the pro-rata parental leave. Very few employees resign while on Parental Leave (Table 9).
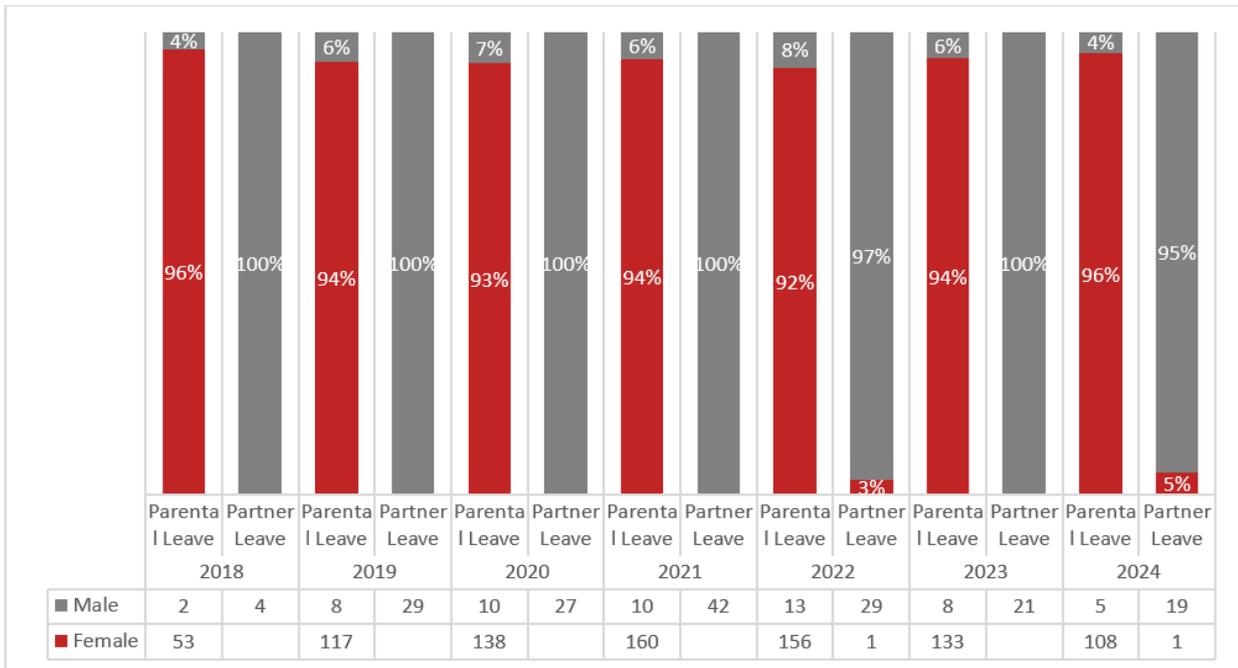

	Parental Leave 2018	Partner Leave 2018	Parental Leave 2019	Partner Leave 2019	Parental Leave 2020	Partner Leave 2020	Parental Leave 2021	Partner Leave 2021	Parental Leave 2022	Partner Leave 2022	Parental Leave 2023	Partner Leave 2023	Parental Leave 2024	Partner Leave 2024
Male	2	4	8	29	10	27	10	42	13	29	8	21	5	19
Female	53		117		138		160		156	1	133		108	1

Figure 7: Parental Leave and Partner leave uptake

Table 8: Paid Parental Leave (Primary) within 12 months of commencing at Griffith, 2018-2024

Year	Female / Woman	Male / Men	% of Total Parental Leave
2018	3	0	5.4%
2019	5	2	5.5%
2020	6	0	4.0%
2021	12	1	6.9%
2022	11	2	6.1%
2023	10	2	7.0%
2024	12	0	10.4%
Disclaimer: Definitions for this data are not well-defined; therefore, discrepancies have been found across various data sources. Limitations have been identified in the current methodology; however, these definitions were retained due to consistency in approach across other flexibility datasets.			

Table 9: Resignation while on Parental Leave (Primary) 2018-2024

Year	Female / Woman	Male / Men	% of Total Parental Leave
2018	1	0	1.8%
2019	2	0	1.6%
2020	0	0	0
2021	0	0	0
2022	2	0	1.1%
2023	0	0	0
2024	0	0	0
Total	5	0	0.5%

Disclaimer: Definitions for this data are not well-defined; therefore, discrepancies have been found across various data sources. Limitations have been identified in the current methodology; however, these definitions were retained due to consistency in approach across other flexibility datasets.

Impact

In 2024, staff were consulted on their workplace flexibility experiences through the employee engagement data (n=3776) and five (5) focus groups (n=18 participants). This focus group data took an intersectional approach, interviewing those with parental and/or caregiving responsibilities and staff with disabilities. Further, one-on-one interviews were conducted with people leaders (n=8).

> "
> For me, working from home is one part of the flexibility. But the other significant part for me is just being able to take time off [for an appointment] or take a longer lunch if needed. (Focus Group response, Workplace Flexibility – Staff with Disabilities).

> "
> Having it [parents' room] there as a service, I was very impressed that it existed. (Focus Group Response – Professional Staff Parents and Carers)

> "
> They gave me a full-time contract and then we did a [reversible part-time appointment] after that. Although you have to be at Griffith for a year before you can do that it was a special negotiation, they did with me. (Focus Group response, Workplace Flexibility – Academic Staff Parents and Carers).

> "
> Work from home has been really good as well because I live a fair drive from campus and on days where I can just work school hours and then go and pick the kids up, so I don't have to worry about childcare. (Focus Group Response – Professional Staff Parents and carers).

The qualitative data revealed that:

Qualitative Data Outcomes	
Theme	**Description**
Flexibility is dependent on the leader	The experience of hybrid working is inconsistent, individual flexible arrangements were dependant on their direct leader and their interpretation of the policy. It highlighted departmental attitudes towards flexibility influence opportunities for flexibility **(Actions 1 & 3).**
Flexibility provided higher job satisfaction	When staff had access to flexible work arrangements, they had a more positive working experience and higher job satisfaction.
Workplace flexibility ranked seventh as one of Griffith's strengths by employees	The employee engagement data showed that flexible working was one of Griffith's strengths, with it being ranked the seventh highest score.
Workloads and timetabling impacted flexibility for academic staff	Academic staff experience fewer flexible workloads than professional staff. Timetabling of classes mean academics have an intense work schedule and less flexibility around timings. This can be particularly challenging for parents and/or those with caregiving responsibilities **(Action 5).**
Flexibility is a talent attraction measure, particularly for people with disabilities	Flexible working arrangements are attractive to candidates when applying for roles at Griffith, including candidates with disabilities **(Action 7).**
The reasonable adjustments process is difficult for people with a disability	Staff with disabilities can find the process for reasonable adjustments difficult, with the process placing barriers to access what they need **(Action 2).**
Start and end times and being able to attend appointments are important flexibilities for parents and carers	Flexible work arrangements are important for staff with parental/caregiving responsibilities to fulfil their responsibilities both at work and outside of work. Flexibility around start and end times and attend appointments during work hours are common requests **(Action 6).**
Employees can work full time if they have flexibility. If flexibility is not provided, then they need to work part-time	Roles that enable flexibility are more likely to have staff work full-time in comparison to when flexibility is not granted, and staff may need to work part-time to meet their responsibilities outside of work.
When staff knew about parents' rooms, they were well regarded	Staff who accessed parents' rooms and facilities were impressed by the space and enhanced their work experience, especially when returning from parental leave. However, staff were not always aware of the facilities **(Actions 3 & 4).**
Work from home policy supported workplace flexibility however some staff felt the split was too rigid and doesn't consider flexible work arrangements other than work location.	The introduction of a work from home policy supported staff manage their workplace flexibility agreements. There were instances where staff felt the policy was too rigid and acknowledgement that workplace flexibility is more than just work location **(Action 6).**

Further Action

The actions being taken follow the below themes:

- Providing education for staff and people leaders
- Enhancing communication to staff on existing policies and expectations with flexibility.
- Conducting reviews of policies and procedures regarding flexible work arrangements.

These actions take an intersectional approach incorporating outputs related to those with parental and/or caregiving responsibilities, staff with disabilities and non-binary employees.

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
Providing education for staff and people leaders						
Leadership						
1	Staff are having inconsistent experiences with accessing workplace flexibility, with the experience dependant on an individual's leader. Providing training to people leaders on our policy, University expectations and how to support staff with flexible workplace arrangements will provide a more consistent	Implement training for people leaders on working from home policy, flexible work arrangements, University expectations and how to support staff. Including: • Manager Essentials - Incorporate information on Griffith's flexible work arrangements and how to support staff working flexibly as part of manager essentials training. • Future Leaders - Incorporate information on Griffith's flexible work arrangements and why it is important as part of future leaders training.	2025 – 2026	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion Human Resources - Capability & Development	Director (HR)	Increase in "Griffith has enough flexible work arrangements to meet my needs" and "I have access to the flexibility I need to manage my work and other commitments" in 2025 employee engagement data.

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
	experience amongst staff.	• Use the senior leadership forum to present workplace flexibility information and training • Develop a toolkit to support HR Business Partners support leaders with managing flexible working with their employees.				
Staff with Disabilities						
2	Staff with disabilities experience barriers accessing reasonable adjustments and the process can be challenging to navigate. Enabling people leaders to support their employees through this process can ease the burden on the employee and ensure their needs are met.	Provide training on the workplace reasonable adjustment process for employees with disabilities to people leaders through: • Manager Essentials • Future Leaders • Staff onboarding process Liaise with Disability Advisory Committee for input into the training.	2025-2026	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion	Director (HR)	Increase in number of staff who have engaged in the reasonable adjustments process

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
	Enhance communication to prospective and existing staff on current workplace flexibility entitlements and policies					
3	Staff need to be able to readily access information regarding flexibility throughout their employee lifecycle. A central location with current information will ensure this is accessible to all staff and contribute to less inconsistency if reliant on their leaders.	Review the flexible workplace Griffith site, ensuring it is up to date, available and known to staff. Communicate with staff to complete the work from home request in the staff portal.	2025 – annual	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion	Director (HR)	Increase in web site visits on the flexible workplace site. Increase in Work from Home requests in the staff portal.
4	Candidates are seeking flexible work arrangements when applying for jobs. By ensuring our policies and expectations regarding flexible work are available to jobseekers we have a better chance at attracting talent and removing barriers to employment.	Embed workplace flexibility information into the recruitment and onboarding process by: • Amending job descriptions highlighting Griffith's flexible work arrangement options • Amending position descriptions to include a section on flexible work arrangements where appropriate • Incorporating information on flexible working into the email sent to new starters.	2025	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion Human Resources – Capability & Development	Director (HR)	Increased external applications to advertised jobs. Increased new starters aware of the flexible work arrangements available.

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
**Academic Staff**					
**Timetabling process review and communication**					
5	Academic staff experience more rigidity around timings for student teaching activities, high expectations for being contactable by students and research expectations	Embed flexibility considerations for staff and students during the Timetabling review project.	2025 - 2026	Transformation	Provost	Enhanced engagement of academic staff in questions related to flexibility.
**Review Policies and Procedures**					
6	Employees flexible work: employees require more than the ability to work from home. Flexible start/end times, attend appointments during work hours and/or working outside regular hours were all seen as important ways for employees to work flexibly. Currently Griffith has a Work from Home policy but does not	• Create and implement a policy for flexible work • Communicate the new policy with staff, including senior leadership endorsement. • As part of the creation of the flexible work policy, ensure it meets the requirements for staff with parental and/or caregiving responsibilities as well as the University.	2025-2026	Provost Workplace Relations	Provost	A formal flexible work policy is created.

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
	have a workplace flexibility policy.					
	Staff with Disabilities					
7	Staff with disabilities are more likely to require flexible workplace arrangements as part of reasonable adjustments process. By ensuring the process and support is adequate for their needs we are more likely to attract and retain high quality employees.	Make flexible work arrangements and reasonable adjustment process more streamlined for staff with disabilities by: • Annually consulting with the Disability Advisory Committee on the reasonable adjustments process, ensuring it meets the needs of staff with disabilities and the University. • Create staff resources that provide information on disability inclusion and workplace adjustments including staff disability access and inclusion procedure and toolkits for HR Employees and Managers (as per Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan)	2025 – annual	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion Workplace, Health & Safety	Director – HR Director – Health, Safety & Wellbeing	Increase in staff who have undertaken the reasonable adjustments process

	Rationale/Evidence	Actions & Outputs	Timeframe (start & end)	Person/Group responsible for implementing action	Senior Leader accountable for action delivery	Desired Outcome/Targets/Success Indicators
			Non-Binary Staff			
8	Non-binary staff saw the biggest decline in workplace flexibility access and uptake. By liaising with those with lived experience we can identify if there are any structural barriers with the policy.	Further understand the experiences of non-binary staff at Griffith regarding workplace flexibility by: • Liaising with the Griffith Pride Committee and relevant staff to review the workplace flexibility policy. • Review membership of the Griffith Pride Committee ensuring there is wider representation of the LGBTQIA+ community, with a focus on increasing the number of non-binary staff on the committee. • Reviewing data from the AWEI employee survey, particularly focusing on workplace flexibility relevant data.	2025-2026	Human Resources - Diversity & Inclusion Griffith Pride Committee	Director - HR	Improved engagement scores for non-binary staff.