



Queensland Women's Strategy

AusIMM Submission

**Queensland Department of Justice
and Attorney-General**

12 October 2021

About AusIMM

The Australasian Institute for Mining and Metallurgy (AusIMM) is the peak body for resources professionals, with over 13,000 members across more than 110 countries. Established in 1893 and operating under Royal Charter, we represent professionals across all levels of the mining industry, working from exploration through to delivery, and in disciplines ranging from mining engineering to geoscience, health and safety, finance, government and academia.

As the trusted voice in resources, we exercise shared leadership for our sector and global community. We advance our sector's continued technical and professional leadership, champion community understanding and support for the sector, and work with governments and our partners to develop policies and implement programs for the advancement of the sector and community.

In Queensland, we are proud to represent more than 2,700 members working across the state, from the Northwest Minerals Province through to key industrial hubs including Townsville, Mackay, Rockhampton and the Southeast region. Our Queensland membership reflects the whole of the sector, and the full spectrum of professionals whose expertise sustains our industry and community.

Our purpose is to advance the sector for the benefit of the community.

The Queensland Women's Strategy

This submission comes in response to the Queensland Government's consultation on a new Queensland Women's Strategy (Women's Strategy), which seeks to build on the achievements and progress made under the Queensland Women's Strategy 2016-2021.

The new Strategy aims to identify priorities and set a plan for achieving gender equality through participation and leadership, economic security, safety, health and wellbeing.

AusIMM believe the resources sector has an important role to play in achieving these goals. We know, for example, the sector offers a pathway for women to access employment opportunities that benefit not only individual professionals, but the communities in which they work and live. Our annual Women in Mining Survey, for example, shows approximately 75% of women working in the resources sector earn more than the average female Australian salary, and are amongst the most highly qualified cohorts of the Australian community.

When it comes to creating opportunity for women through economic participation, AusIMM know that while there is a substantial upside, the resources sector requires specific focus. In 2019-20, the resources sector employed more than 41,000 Queenslanders at an average salary level of approximately \$146,000 per annum.¹ Employment is spread across a diverse range of disciplines, and across every corner of the state, but national statistics indicate women account for no more than 19.8% of the current workforce.²

These statistics point to the opportunity that exists to advance women's economic empowerment through greater participation in the resources workforce. The sector is now the second lowest industry for female representation in Australia, despite its substantial contributions to the Queensland economy and community.

Increasing women's participation will delivers benefits for our industry, economy and community.

AusIMM Support for Women in Resources

Core to our status as the peak body and trusted voice for people in resources is the role we play in advocating, educating, sharing insights, and setting standards that support all members of the community to access opportunity through a career in the resources sector.

Our focus in creating opportunity for the community extends, of course, to women pursuing careers in resources. We have a proud legacy as advocates and supporters of women in mining, borne out in the work of our Women in Mining Networks, International Women's Day Series, Women in Mining Survey and Analysis and Women on Boards Scholarships delivered with the Victorian Government.

¹ Lawrence Consulting, 2020, 'Economic Impact of Minerals and Energy Sector on the Queensland Economy 2019/20', commissioned by the Queensland Resources Council, available at the [enclosed link](#).

² Australian Bureau of Statistics, Quarterly Labour Force Statistics, Cat no:6291.0.055.003, May 2021.

Our Recommendations to Advance Women's Economic, Social and Physical Wellbeing

Reflecting our leadership role, AusIMM ensure the experiences, priorities and imperatives of our female professional community are brought to the fore in our work with government. As the Department of Justice and Attorney-General develop a new Queensland Women's Strategy, we recommend the Queensland Government commit to the following actions.

1. Promote opportunities for Queensland women in resources

The Government should work with community partners to showcase the breadth of career opportunities that exist within mining and other key sectors of the Queensland economy, and profile female leaders in these fields. We recommend a particular focus partnering with professional bodies like AusIMM on the opportunities and stories of women working in STEM and related disciplines.

2. Collaborate to overcome development barriers for women in resources

The Government should join with the mining sector, professional bodies like AusIMM and community partners to target the advancement of women from early-career technical roles into leadership positions in the Queensland resources sector. We call on the Government to participate in and support scholarships, mentoring, conference, networking, and professional education programs in partnership with AusIMM.

3. Address cultural barriers for women in the mining workplace

The Government should champion research, including our Annual Women in Mining Survey, support information and knowledge sharing, and participate in programs designed to drive positive cultural change for Queensland women in mining.

4. Ensure access to critical services

The Government should support programs to drive positive safety, health, and wellbeing outcomes for women in resources, including by addressing barriers to healthcare and other critical amenities on site.

5. Learn from other jurisdictions

AusIMM recommend the Queensland Government monitor the submissions, findings, and recommendations of the WA Parliamentary Inquiry into Sexual Harassment Against Women in the FIFO Mining Industry. These findings will be an important source of information and learnings relevant to the resources sector and must be considered as part of both the Queensland Government's Women's Strategy and broader response to sexual violence against women.

The recommendations above draw on the data gathered through AusIMM's Annual Women in Mining Survey and broader research in the resources sector, the programs we deliver to advance women in mining, and the perspectives gleaned through our sector-wide membership and women in mining networks.

The Participation, Experiences and Priorities of Women in the Resources Sector

AusIMM Women in Mining Survey

Each year AusIMM conducts research into the experiences and perspectives of women in mining through our Women in Mining Survey. The insights we gain help to reflect on the experiences of and challenges for women in the resources industry and drive positive outcomes to improve gender diversity and inclusion across our sector.

What our analysis reveals is that attraction, retention, and development are the key imperatives for maximising women's economic and social empowerment through the resources sector. These imperatives are particularly relevant in addressing the Government's objectives for the Strategy.

We enclose with this submission copies of the **2021**, **2020** and **2019** results.

Attraction: Raising awareness about the opportunities for women in resources

The Queensland sector offers opportunities for young women and girls to pursue careers across a broad range of disciplines, from Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields through to environmental management, social performance, finance, law, and management. Likewise, the sector offers opportunities for women living in rural, regional, remote, and metropolitan parts of the state.

AusIMM see that attracting female professionals into resources, and supporting their development, is an important way in which our sector can contribute to the economic and social empowerment of Queensland women. We have undertaken research into the factors affecting young Australians' attitudes towards resources careers, which points to key factors for attracting female professionals.

Our research identifies several critical factors influencing interest in careers in resources.

- **Certainty:** Few high-school, university and vocational education age students are fixed on a career in a particular industry, with career certainty trending up with education.
- **Awareness:** Knowledge of the sector varies across states, but knowledge of mining careers is very low, with 94% of students indicating they know 'nothing at all' or only 'a little bit' about mining careers
- **Association:** Spontaneous associations with mining are generally negative to neutral, with young Australians recognising the sector's economic contributions, but having little awareness of the sector's role as a hub for innovation and technological development.
- **Interest:** Low consideration of mining is driven by a lack of knowledge, not conscientious objection based on ethical or environmental concerns.
- **Influence:** Key influences on career aspirations are television and online news, school, friends, and family (particularly parents). An increased understanding of the breadth of career opportunities in the sector, the opportunity to work overseas and across regional and metropolitan locations, and high wages in the industry all have a positive impact in career interest.

AusIMM recommend the Women's Strategy include a commitment by the Queensland Government to work with community and professional partners, including AusIMM, to showcase the breadth of career opportunities that exist within mining and other key sectors of the Queensland economy.

AusIMM recommend profiling Queensland women working in mining and other key sections of the Queensland economy, to raise awareness of the career opportunities that exist for women across disciplines, locations, and stages of their personal and professional lives.

Retention: The career bottleneck

Supporting progression from junior through to middle and senior levels of the resources sector is one of the most substantial ways in which the Government can help to advance the economic and social empowerment of Queensland women.

Technical experience – in operations, maintenance, management, and other functions – is an important step in the career progression of many resources' professionals. This is particularly true for professionals at the early and middle stages of their career, and for those who have not pursued university education. This means early support in women's careers is vital to create opportunity and long-term economic empowerment through the sector.

A lack of opportunities to progress into senior roles is one of the key factors driving female retention challenges in the resources sector. AusIMM research shows a career 'bottleneck' exists for many women in our sector, especially those with technical backgrounds, who seek to advance from operational to leadership and management positions.

Our research also suggests Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women are five times more likely to have high school graduation as their highest level of educational attainment, more likely to be in a junior operational role, and more likely to have less than five years of work experience.

In our most recent Women in Mining Survey, AusIMM saw substantial growth in the number of women who have worked in the sector for 5-10 years (Figure 1) which increased by 5.0% on the previous year. Previous years had shown a concentration of women who were either new to or had no significant experience in the sector. This indicates a promising trend on female industry retention. However, most respondents have been in the sector for 15 years or less (61.1%), which is on par with previous findings.

We provide further demographic information at the **Appendix**.

AusIMM recommend the Government join with partners including AusIMM to target the advancement of women from early-career technical roles into leadership positions. We outline programs in which the Government can participate in the section focused on development and promotion.

Retention: The cultural dimension

Our research also shows a close nexus between retention, professional advancement, and workplace culture (especially in operational and frontline working environments).

In the latest Women in Mining Survey, less than half of respondents indicated their work is valued for its quality (rather than the gender of the worker), and this figure is even lower for women in Fly-In Fly-Out and Drive-In Drive-Out roles (37%, compared to a 47% average). Only 40% of female respondents believed remuneration is equitable across genders, and 47% said disrespectful behaviour is quickly addressed.

Qualitative responses to the Survey, and the message we receive consistently from women within our professional community, only reiterate these findings. Women in resources value their careers, the opportunity to ply their diverse technical and professional expertise in the industry, and the value that mining creates for the community. However, a perceived poor culture, lack of leadership on diversity, and difficulties in accessing opportunities to progress can push women out of the sector.

AusIMM recommend the Queensland Government collaborate with industry and community partners to address the cultural barriers for women in resources, including by championing the findings of research such as the Women in Mining Survey and programs outlined in this submission.

Retention: Health, safety and wellbeing

Health, safety and wellbeing are imperatives for the resources sector, and fundamental in ensuring women not only access opportunities but are able to meaningfully advance their careers in mining.

The Women in Mining Survey shows that on-site amenities, healthcare and wellbeing support require further focus. When asked about the quality of health care services on-site, 30.0% of FIFO and DIDO respondents to the 2021 Survey indicated they believe health care quality is 'average'.

Although there was a 5.0% reduction in the proportion of women reporting 'below average' healthcare on-site, there continue to be signs that many services are inadequate. Of note is the fact that almost twice as many FIFO and DIDO workers rated healthcare services as 'below average', compared to 'very good'.

Responses do not emphasise a lack of operations-specific care or services; there is no evidence from the Women in Mining Survey that industry is failing to meet regulatory occupational health and safety standards. Rather, female respondents emphasise a need to provide more support around women's health, wellbeing, and mental health.

The emphasis in responses on wellbeing and mental health is particularly important given the strong correlation between mental health, psychological safety and occupational health and safety performance.

AusIMM recommend the Government support programs to drive positive safety, health, and wellbeing outcomes for women in resources by addressing barriers to healthcare and critical amenities on site.

Evidence of sexual harassment in the resources sector

The findings of the Human Rights Commission's National Sexual Harassment Inquiry - Respect@Work – and evidence emerging in a Western Australian Parliamentary Inquiry suggest a high prevalence of sexual assault and misconduct in parts of the Australian resources sector. The resources sector has a national footprint, and findings of the Western Australia Inquiry cannot be assumed to apply only in that state.

Both inquiries provide an important moment of reflection and urgent call to action for our industry.

As the peak body for people working in mining, AusIMM is committed to ensuring that professionals practice at the highest standards of safety and acknowledge the threats to, and breaches of, safety that too many women have encountered in their workplace.

Collaboration between all facets of the industry is important to further build a culture of safety that extends from company head offices to mine sites. The professionals AusIMM represent play a crucial part in driving this enhanced safety culture. Given this, AusIMM looks forward to working with all levels of Government, mining companies, unions, peak bodies and people in the sector to promote and secure the safety of women in the mining industry.

AusIMM recommend the Queensland Government monitor the submissions, findings, and recommendations of the WA Parliamentary Inquiry. These findings will be an important source of information and learnings relevant to the resources sector and must be considered as part of both the Queensland Women's Strategy and broader response to sexual violence against women.

Development: Advancing Queensland women in resources

AusIMM research emphasises that professional and technical development, clear leadership pathways and connections to industry peers and mentors are the most effective mechanisms for driving women's social and economic empowerment through the resources sector.

Indeed, our 2021 Women in Mining Survey found 79.0% of women in resources rate leadership as a top priority for diversity and inclusion in the sector, and 55% identify it as a top professional development priority. Health and safety, technology, digitisation and innovation also continue to be clear priorities, reflecting a desire to maintain adaptability in a rapidly developing industry.

Our research also shows there continues to be exceptionally high demand for mentoring and coaching. As one Women in Mining Survey respondent explained:

The reason I entered the resources sector is 100% the result of joining a resources sector mentoring program, where I was mentored by an incredible female who had created a successful career for herself.

Women in mining seek to access professional development opportunities through various channels, including in-person and hybrid events, conferences, and training. We are working to meet this demand and support women in mining through several strategic initiatives, some of which we outline below.

Women on Boards Scholarship

As we outline above, our industry lags in providing leadership opportunities for women.

Together with the Victorian Government, we deliver a scholarship series designed to boost the number of women on resources industry boards. The scholarship includes access to the Australian Institute of Company Directors 'Company Director's Course', facilitated introductions to industry leaders, and further opportunities for women to develop leadership skills and experience.

AusIMM recommend the Queensland Government work with AusIMM to expand the scholarship to include women working in the Queensland sector.

National Mentoring Program

Our national mentoring program delivers a pathway for mining professionals to receive career guidance and support, make industry connections, share knowledge, and help to nurture future leaders.

The online program provides accessibility and opportunity regardless of location, and we are proud to have supported more than 200 participants since the program's inception in 2020. AusIMM also work with our industry partners to facilitate scholarships for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander professionals.

AusIMM recommend the Women's Strategy include a commitment to expand access to existing mentorship programs, such as AusIMM's, which create opportunities for women in STEM and related disciplines to advance their careers in in the mining sector.

International Women's Day Event Series

We note the current Women's Strategy includes commitment to deliver a Women in STEM event to increase participation and leadership.

Since 2019, AusIMM have delivered an annual international Women's Day Event Series, which is the premiere event marking international women's day within the resources sector. Taking place across five Australian capital cities, including Brisbane, the series brings together more than 1,500 delegates to celebrate the women in resources and empower professionals to drive positive change in the sector.

Speakers at the event in the past have included Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Cathy Foley, South Australia's Chief Scientist, Dr Caroline McMillen and leadership expert Dr Kirsten Ferguson.

AusIMM recommend the Government partner with AusIMM and other associations active in STEM fields to support the events we are already delivering for women across the community. We encourage the Department, Office of Women, Attorney-General and Queensland Chief Scientist to support our International Women's Day Event Series.

Women in Mining networks

AusIMM are proud to support our women in mining networks and their 4,800+ members to promote women's advancement in the sector through networking events, mentoring and professional development initiatives. We are also proud to work closely with kindred networks, including Women in Mining and Resources Queensland.

AusIMM recommend the Government engagement further with us on opportunities to support these networks, which are vital in providing the grassroots connection and support demanded by women working across our sector.

Conferences

AusIMM are also the largest provider of mining related technical conferences in Australia, ranging from our New Leaders Conference and Thought Leadership Series to technical conferences covering all disciplines and areas of practice. We deliver these conferences in a hybrid format, to maximise accessibility for professionals working across regional, remote and metropolitan locations.

For AusIMM, we see the provision of comprehensive and accessible development, networking, and leadership opportunities as key to supporting the continuous professional advancement of women and other under-represented communities within our workforce.

Courses

AusIMM also deliver a wide range of globally recognised online mining courses, including professional certificates, short courses and masterclasses.

Our courses are focused on shaping technical best practice for a strong future mining workforce. We see this as a critical mechanism for supporting the development of professionals, especially women, at all stages of their career.

All programs have been developed in consultation with leading organisations in the mining industry, subject matter experts and community leaders, and cover topics including social responsibility, environment management, process automation and diversity and inclusion in mining.

AusIMM recommend the Queensland Government look to support existing professional development opportunities, including courses and conferences, that will support the advancement of women in mining.

Partnering on these programs is an efficient means by which the Government can support progression and combat the career bottleneck experienced by many women working in our sector. This will drive women's economic empowerment and participation through the sector, in turn contributing to the objectives articulated in the Women's Strategy.

AusIMM commend these programs as opportunities for the Queensland Government to partner with the community to deliver on the objectives of the Women's Strategy, address barriers, and drive women's social and economic empowerment through the resources sector.

Appendix: A demographic
snapshot of women working in
resources

A demographic snapshot of women working in resources

The following graphics have been generated using data from the AusIMM Women in Mining Survey 2021.

Figure 1. Age of survey respondents.

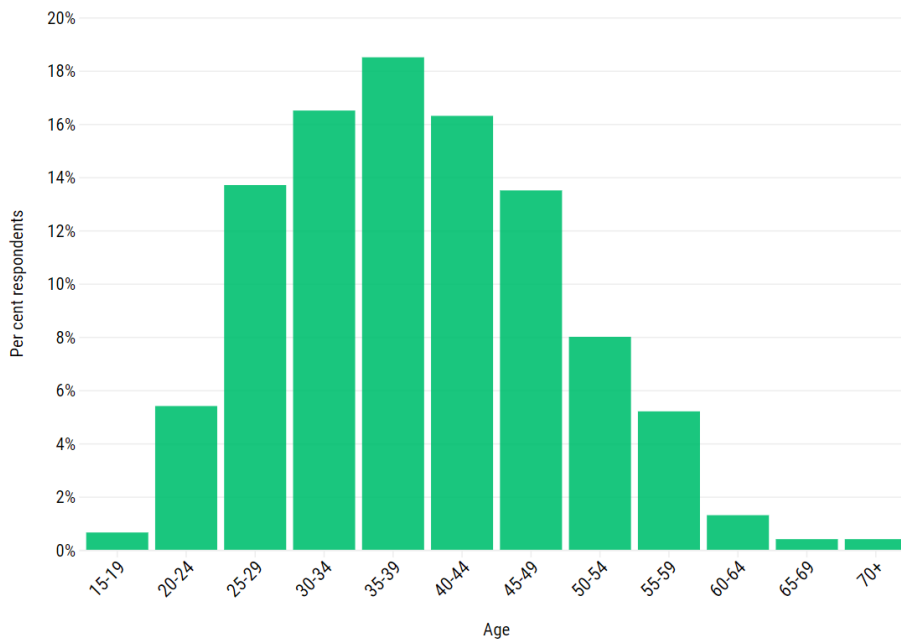


Figure 2. Annual salary

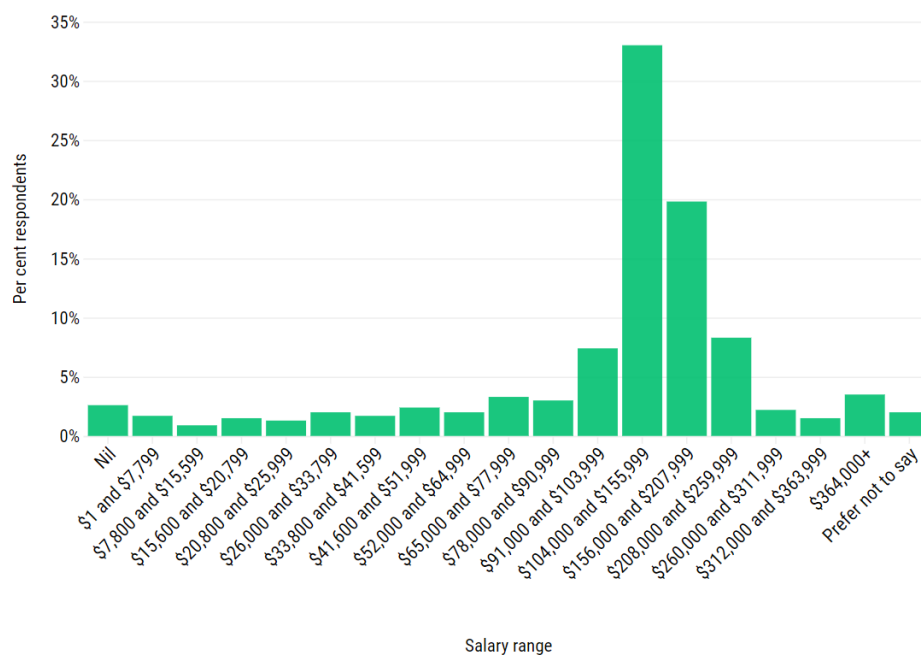


Figure 3. Years in the resources sector

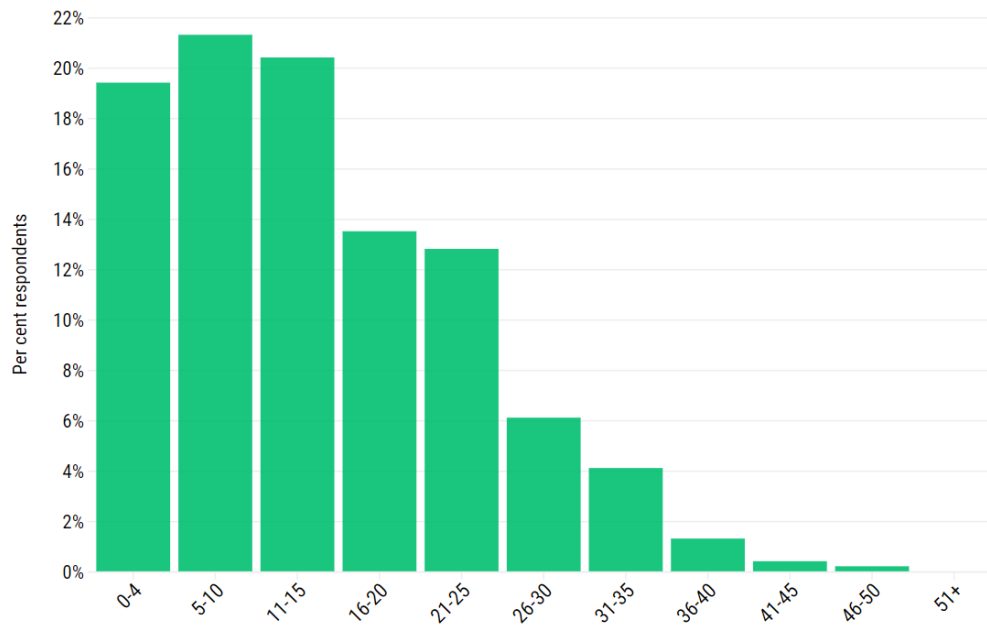


Figure 4. Work location.

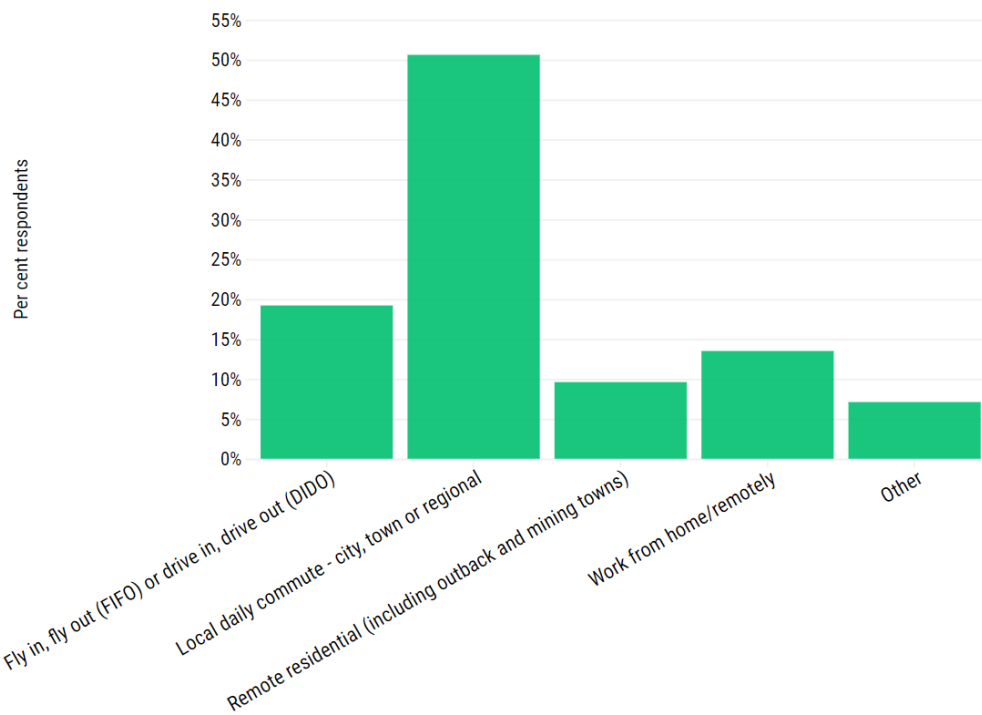


Figure 5. Nature of current role.

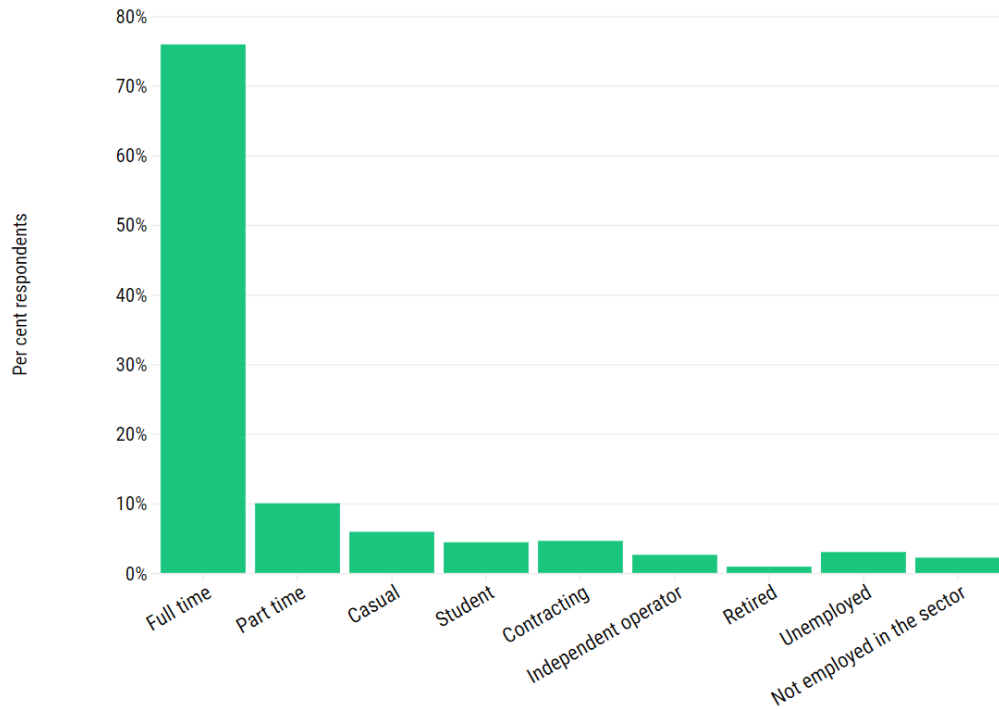


Figure 6. Highest levels of education received.

