



Pathway

Reasons

for work and
community
participation

September 2021





#whatsyourReason for work and community participation?

My Pathway is a social and economic development organisation operating from the Torres Strait to Tasmania. Our businesses deliver employment services, training, business mentoring, community projects and facility services through a mix of government and private contracts.

Every day we work towards getting more people into meaningful employment. This can involve developing their skills, undertaking training, community activities and supporting employers to find and bring new staff on board.

We felt it was important to capture the top reasons that inspire Australians to work and participate in their communities. These reasons will help inform our people and communities about what motivates employment.

We conducted a short digital survey from June to September 2021 and promoted it with our staff, clients, and social followers. The survey attracted 309 responses from people residing in Australia who were at least 18 years' old.

Disclaimer

Survey results are intended to provide a general view of Australian attitudes to work and community participation. The material is based on a broad and public request for participation, however the information collected may not be accurate or complete, and it should not be relied on as such.

Opinions expressed in the survey results do not constitute personal recommendations or consider personal employment objectives or the needs of individual clients. Readers should consider whether any advice or recommendations in our research is suitable for their particular circumstances and where necessary, seek professional advice.



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Insights

All responses

Consistently, responders cited financial stability their top reason for working (40%). While it was an expected result, there were prevalent shifts when the data is analysed by age, location or income. Professional satisfaction (22%) and purpose (17%) rounded out the top three reasons for holding down a job.

When it came to developing skills and participating in the community, responders moved away from financial motivators. Providing a sense of purpose (25%) and improving their contribution to the workplace (24%) were the leading reasons for professional development. Helping others (30%) and personal satisfaction (23%) were the most popular reasons for community involvement.

What is your most important reason for working (paid employment)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Financial stability	39.8%
Professional satisfaction	21.7%
Work provides purpose	16.5%
Help others	15.9%
Routine and structure	5.2%
I currently don't have paid employment, but I'm looking for work	0.3%
I don't plan to enter paid employment any time soon	0.3%
Other	0.3%

What is your most important reason for undertaking professional development, training or education?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Development, training and education provides purpose	24.9%
Improve workplace contribution	23.9%
Professional satisfaction	19.7%
Improve earning capacity	18.1%
Structured career development	7.4%
I currently don't undertake any professional development, training or education, but I'd like to	4.9%
I don't plan on undertaking any professional development, training or education any time soon	1.0%
Other	0.0%

What is your most important reason for being involved in your community (e.g. volunteering, community groups, projects)?

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Help others	30.4%
Personal satisfaction	23.0%
Community work provides purpose	19.4%
I'm obligated to receive income support	13.6%
I currently don't get involved in my community, but I'd like to	6.5%
Routine and structure	5.2%
I don't plan on getting involved in my community any time soon	0.6%
Other	1.3%

Responses by age

Several trends emerged when responses were analysed by responders age, showing a general change in priorities through a working life cycle.

On average, one in four younger employees aged 18-45 rated professional satisfaction their top reason for working, which dropped to just 9% for those over 45 who were more akin to purpose being a leading reason for work (20%).

Six percent of employees aged 25-44 don't do any professional development activities compared to just 2% of their younger and older counterparts.

Those aged 35-44 were less likely to get involved in their community, but said they wanted to (13%) compared to just 2% in other age categories.

What is your most important reason for working (paid employment)?

ANSWER CHOICES	18-24	25-34	35-44	45+
Financial stability	37.5%	40.5%	36.5%	41.3%
Professional satisfaction	30.0%	24.6%	20.8%	8.7%
Work provides purpose	5.0%	17.5%	19.8%	19.6%
Help others	22.5%	11.1%	16.7%	21.7%
Routine and structure	5.0%	5.6%	5.2%	4.3%
I currently don't have paid employment, but I'm looking for work	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	0.0%
I don't plan to enter paid employment any time soon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Other	0.0%	0.0%	1.0%	2.2%

What is your most important reason for undertaking professional development, training or education?

ANSWER CHOICES	18-24	25-34	35-44	45+
Development, training and education provides purpose	12.5%	25.4%	26.0%	32.6%
Improve workplace contribution	30.0%	20.6%	20.8%	30.4%
Professional satisfaction	17.5%	25.4%	14.6%	15.2%
Improve earning capacity	32.5%	12.7%	22.9%	10.9%
Structured career development	5.0%	8.7%	10.4%	0.0%
I currently don't undertake any professional development, training or education, but I'd like to	2.5%	6.3%	5.2%	2.2%
I don't plan on undertaking any professional development, training or education any time soon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.2%
Other	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	6.5%

What is your most important reason for being involved in your community (e.g. volunteering, community groups, projects)?

ANSWER CHOICES	18-24	25-34	35-44	45+
Help others	37.5%	31.7%	24.0%	34.8%
Personal satisfaction	27.5%	20.6%	19.8%	32.6%
Community work provides purpose	5.0%	19.8%	25.0%	17.4%
I'm obligated to receive income support	30.0%	12.7%	12.5%	4.3%
I currently don't get involved in my community, but I'd like to	0.0%	4.8%	12.5%	2.2%
Routine and structure	0.0%	7.9%	5.2%	2.2%
I don't plan on getting involved in my community any time soon	0.0%	0.8%	0.0%	2.2%
Other	0.0%	1.6%	1.0%	4.3%

Responses by location

More than half (52%) of Queensland workers cited financial stability the number one reason they undertake work, compared to an average of 36% across other states and territories. They were also less likely to consider professional satisfaction a leading factor for work, training and development (13%) than other Australians (25%).

Twelve percent of Queenslanders said they'd like to be more involved in their community compared to the rest of Australia at 3%.

What is your most important reason for working (paid employment)?

ANSWER CHOICES	QLD	ALL OTHER
Financial stability	51.5%	36.0%
Professional satisfaction	12.1%	26.5%
Work provides purpose	19.2%	13.0%
Help others	8.1%	20.0%
Routine and structure	7.1%	4.0%
I currently don't have paid employment, but I'm looking for work	1.0%	0.0%
I don't plan to enter paid employment any time soon	0.0%	0.5%
Other	1.0%	0.0%

What is your most important reason for working (paid employment)?

ANSWER CHOICES	QLD	ALL OTHER
Development, training and education provides purpose	31.3%	21.5%
Improve workplace contribution	12.1%	30.0%
Professional satisfaction	13.1%	23.0%
Improve earning capacity	21.2%	17.0%
Structured career development	11.1%	5.0%
I currently don't undertake any professional development, training or education, but I'd like to	8.1%	3.0%
I don't plan on undertaking any professional development, training or education any time soon	2.0%	0.5%
Other	1.0%	0.0%

What is your most important reason for being involved in your community (e.g. volunteering, community groups, projects)?

ANSWER CHOICES	QLD	ALL OTHER
Help others	25.3%	33.5%
Personal satisfaction	22.2%	24.5%
Community work provides purpose	19.2%	19.5%
I'm obligated to receive income support	9.1%	15.5%
I currently don't get involved in my community, but I'd like to	12.1%	3.0%
Routine and structure	7.1%	3.5%
I don't plan on getting involved in my community any time soon	1.0%	0.5%
Other	4.0%	0.0%

Responses by household income

Those with household incomes greater than \$100,000 outranked any other group when identifying financial stability as the most important reason for working (57%). Those with the lowest incomes (under \$50,000) were most likely to consider helping others the top reason for their employment (27%).

When it comes to professional development, purpose consistently increased in importance, from 19% for lower incomes to 43% for higher incomes.

What is your most important reason for working (paid employment)?

ANSWER CHOICES	<\$50,000	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	>\$100,000
Financial stability	37.3%	29.2%	44.1%	57.1%
Professional satisfaction	19.3%	32.1%	23.5%	2.4%
Work provides purpose	12.0%	14.2%	19.1%	26.2%
Help others	26.5%	16.0%	10.3%	4.8%
Routine and structure	4.8%	5.7%	2.9%	7.1%
I currently don't have paid employment, but I'm looking for work	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
I don't plan to enter paid employment any time soon	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.4%
Other	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%



What is your most important reason for undertaking professional development, training or education?

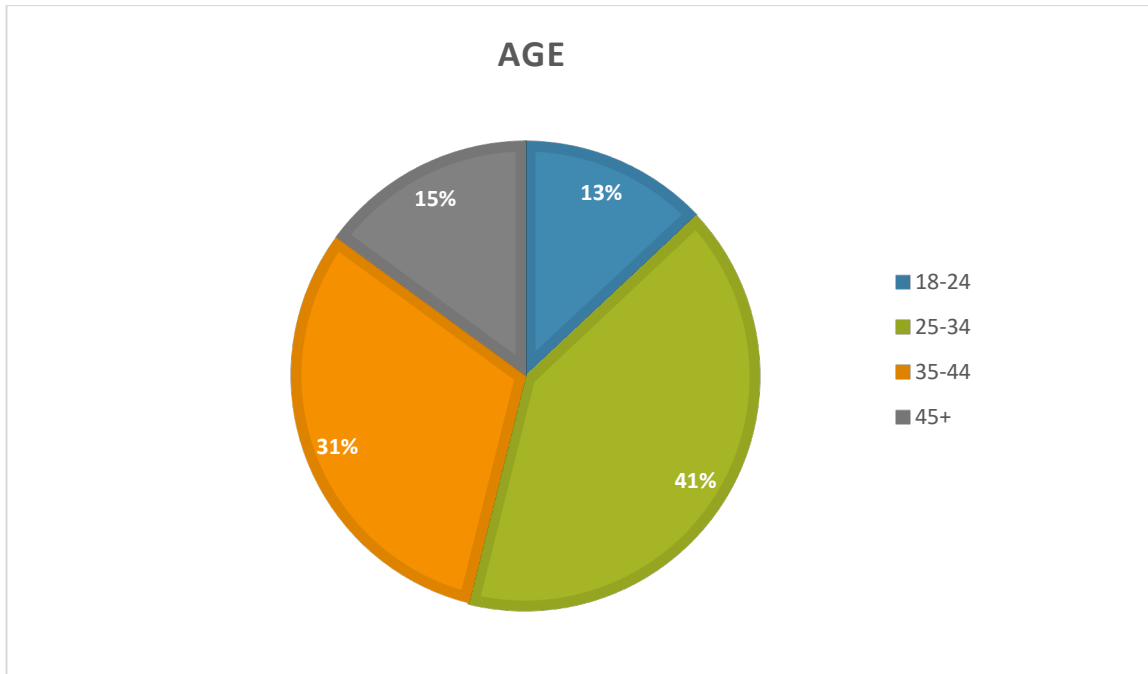
ANSWER CHOICES	<\$50,000	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	>\$100,000
Development, training and education provides purpose	19.3%	20.8%	29.4%	42.9%
Improve workplace contribution	37.3%	19.8%	19.1%	14.3%
Professional satisfaction	14.5%	26.4%	25.0%	9.5%
Improve earning capacity	20.5%	18.9%	11.8%	16.7%
Structured career development	4.8%	6.6%	8.8%	9.5%
I currently don't undertake any professional development, training or education, but I'd like to	2.4%	4.7%	5.9%	7.1%
I don't plan on undertaking any professional development, training or education any time soon	1.2%	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%

What is your most important reason for being involved in your community (e.g. volunteering, community groups, projects)?

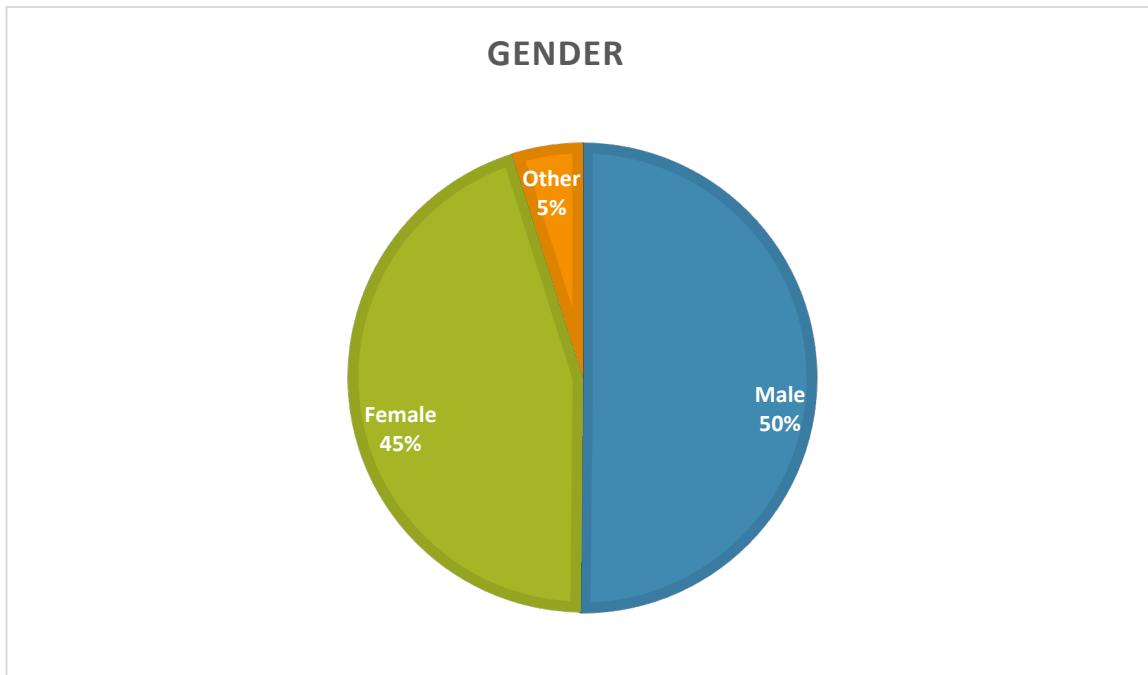
ANSWER CHOICES	<\$50,000	\$50,000- \$74,999	\$75,000- \$99,999	>\$100,000
Help others	30.1%	26.4%	36.8%	33.3%
Personal satisfaction	25.3%	29.2%	17.6%	16.7%
Community work provides purpose	15.7%	18.9%	23.5%	9.0%
I'm obligated to receive income support	25.3%	10.4%	8.8%	2.4%
I currently don't get involved in my community, but I'd like to	0.0%	5.7%	8.8%	16.7%
Routine and structure	2.4%	6.6%	4.4%	7.1%
I don't plan on getting involved in my community any time soon	1.2%	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%	4.8%

Responder profile charts

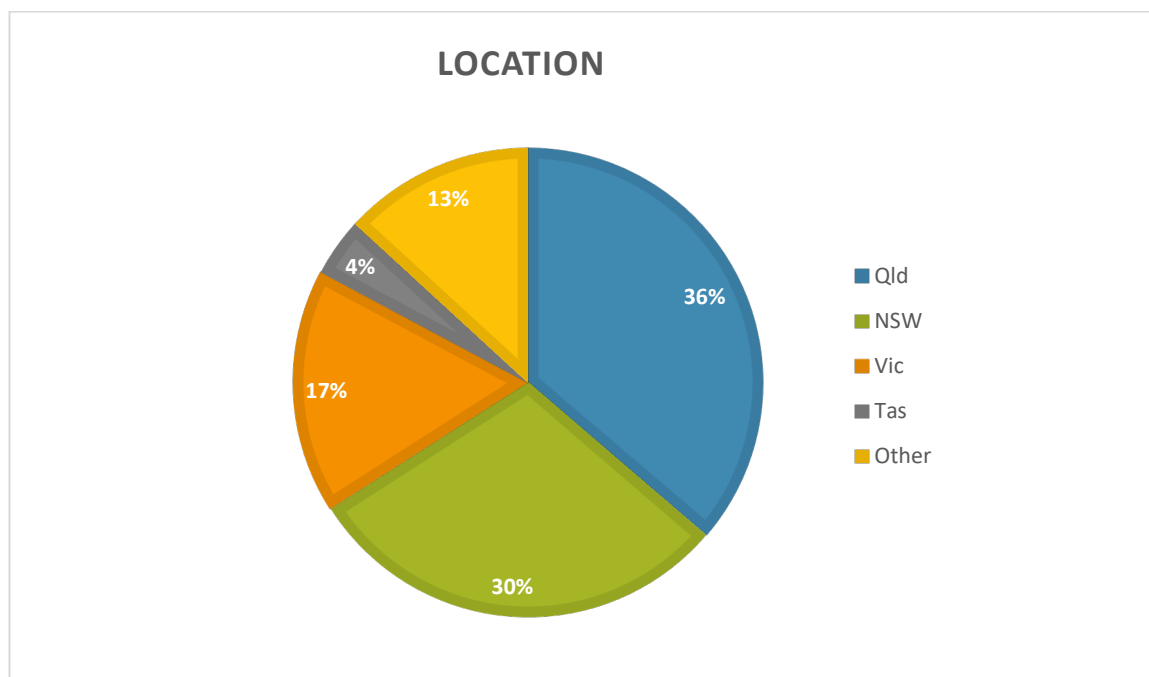
Responders by age



Responders by gender



Responders by state or territory



Responders by household income

