



**AUSTCHAM**  
HONG KONG

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# **GENDER DIVERSITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT SURVEY 2021**

November 2021



# The Built Environment is facing Mega Challenges...

To pursue productive and sustainable development, contribution from all industry stakeholders is essential for coping with the challenges. It is *Time to Change*.

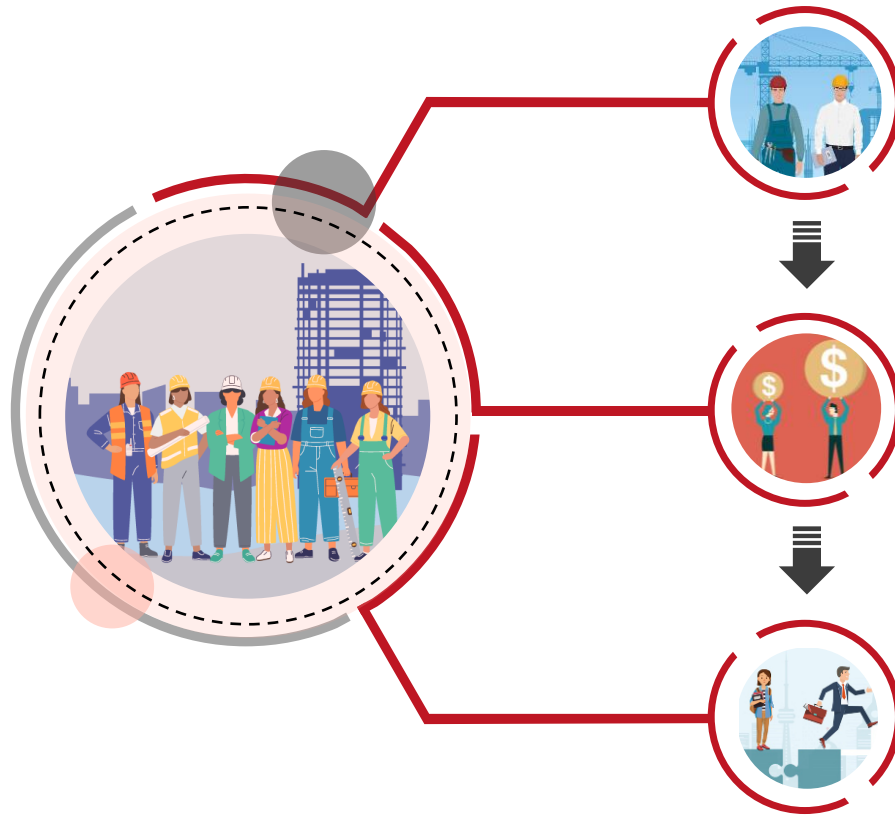




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# Hong Kong... We have a problem...



The construction industry is **heavily dominated by men** (Male: 89.6% ; Female: 10.4%)

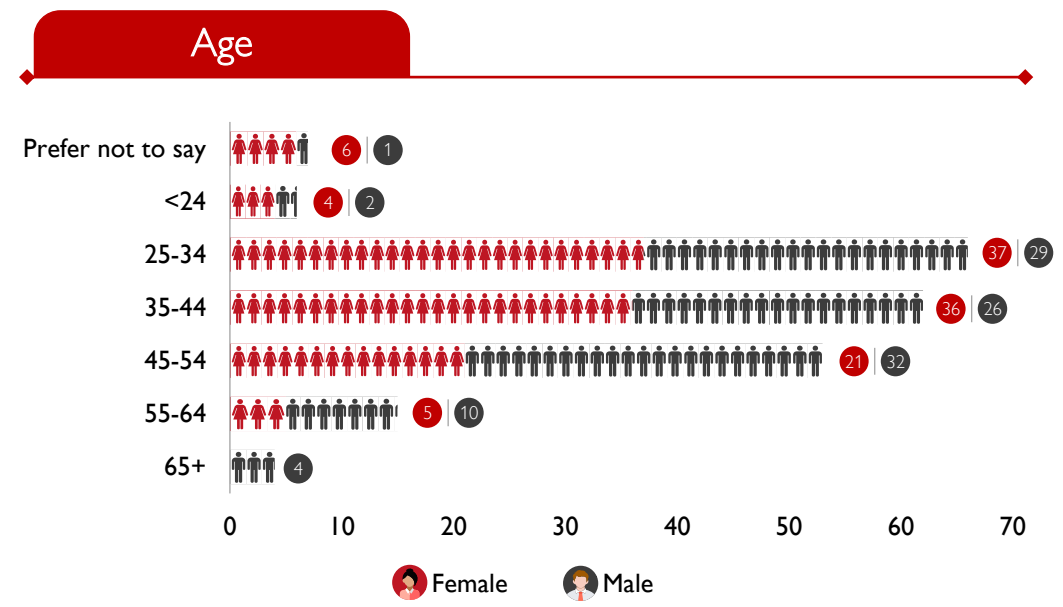
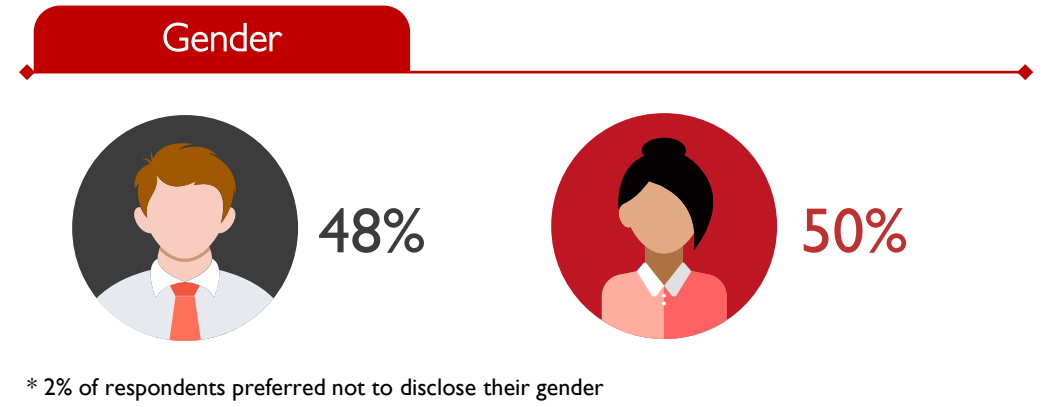
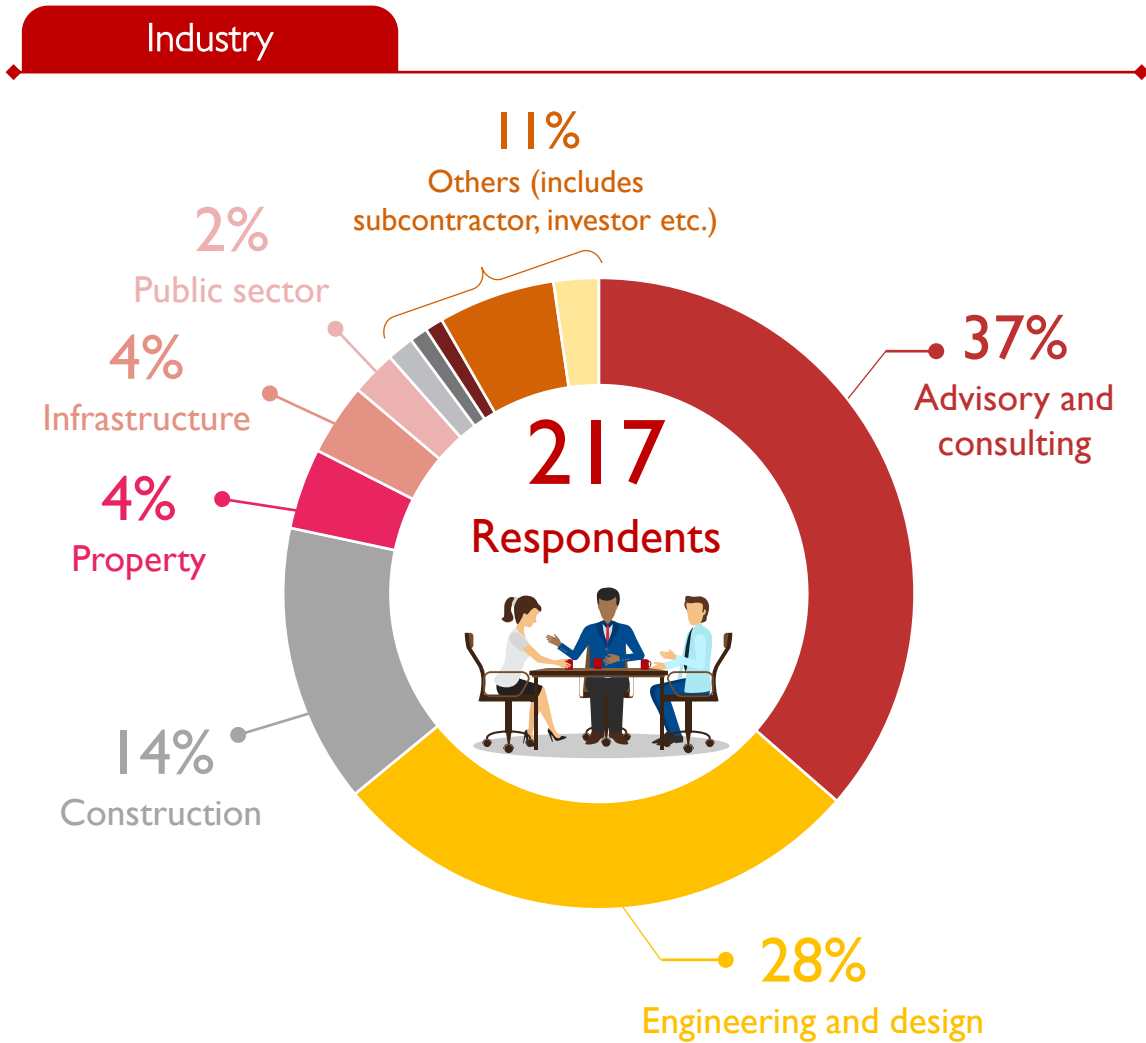
**Women earn less than men by around 22%** on average

**Limited female talent supply** under-representation of female students in Engineering and Technology UGC programme (Male: 70.6%; Female: 29.4%)

\* Source: Hong Kong Women in Figures, Women's commission 2019

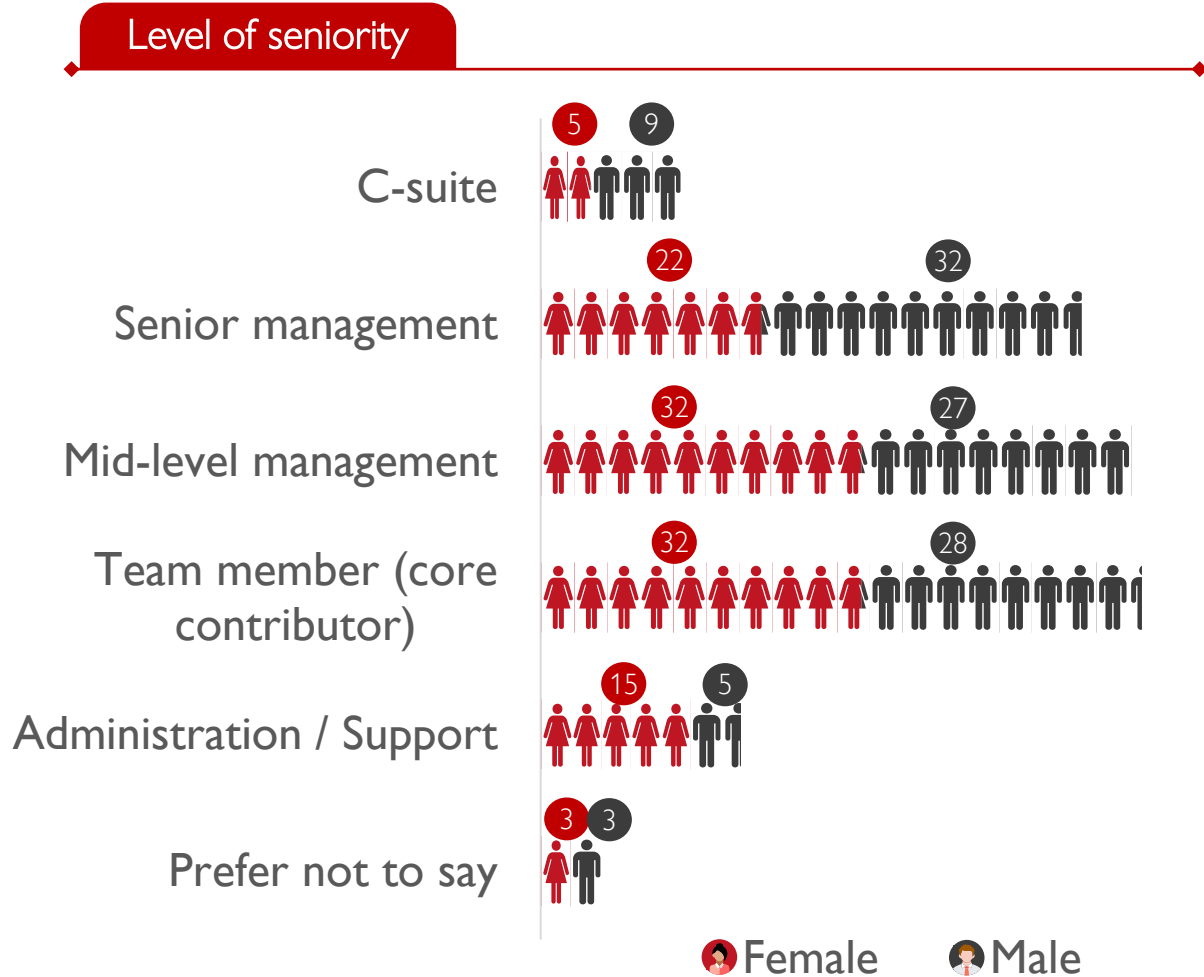


# Broad built environment representation surveyed...



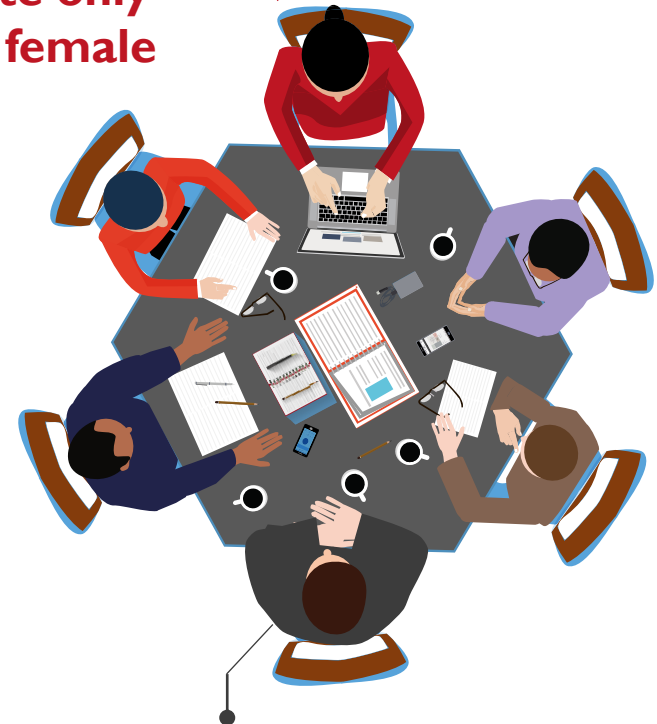


# Fewer women than men in senior positions...



\* 4 respondents preferred not to disclose the gender

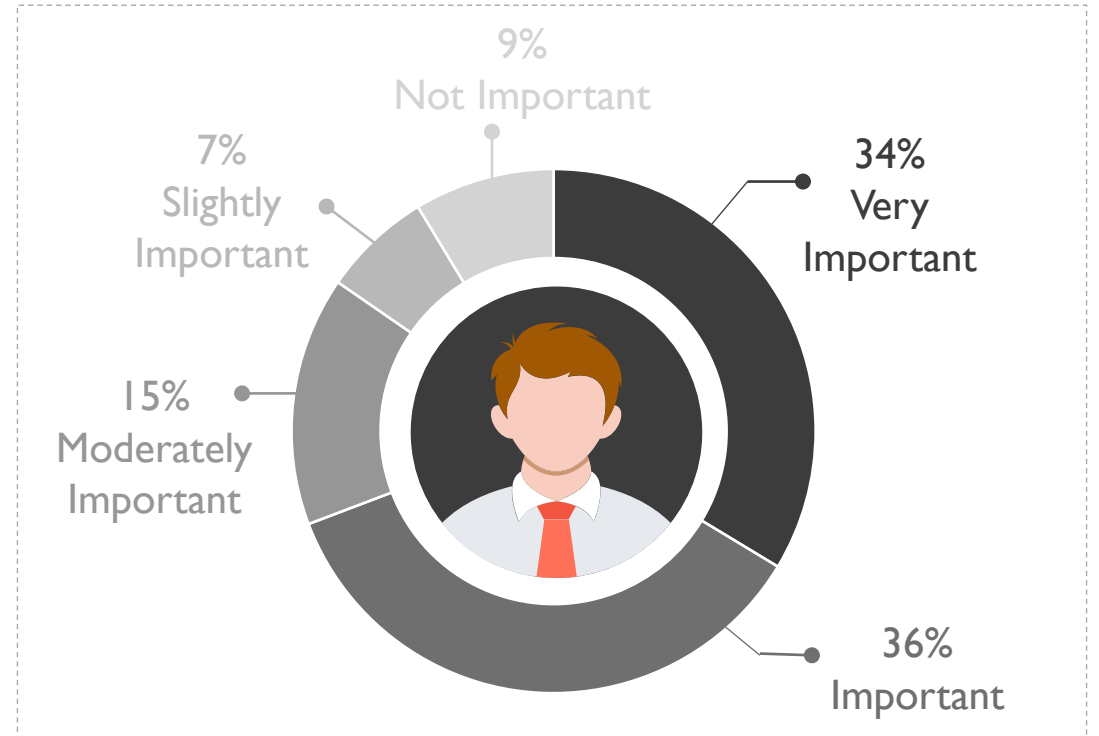
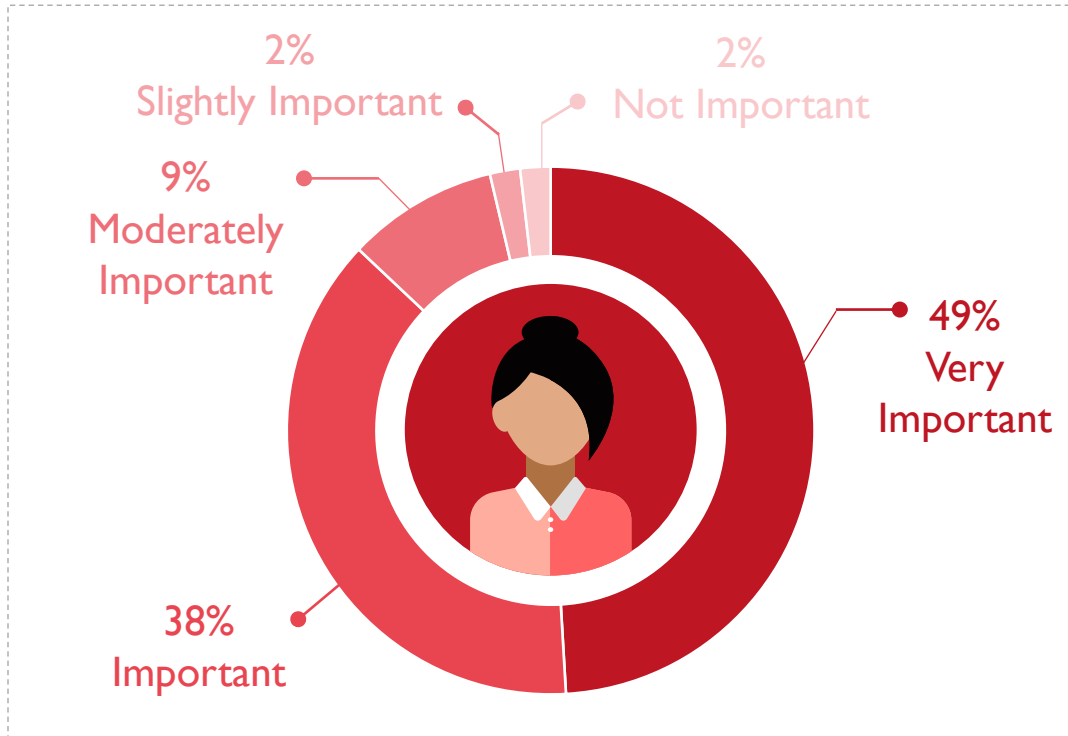
Of the respondents in **C-Suite only** 36% are female



**Young women are more eager to hold a senior leadership position than young men (Female: 78% vs Male: 65%)**



# Opinions vary between males & females...



- **78%** of respondents think that working in a gender equal environment is **important or very important to them**
- **Male** respondents tend to think that **gender equal environment is less important** (Male: 9% vs Female: 2%)

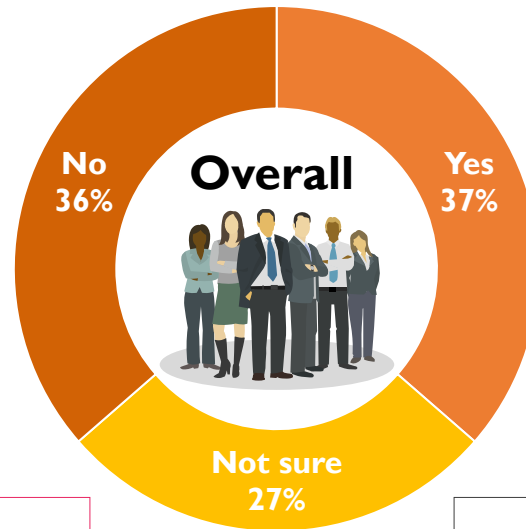




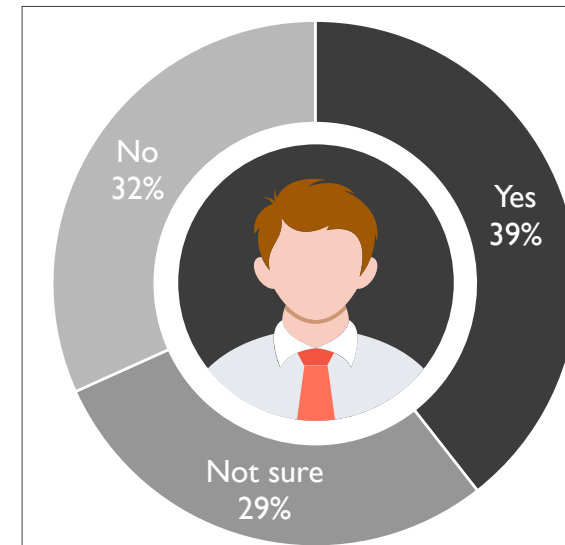
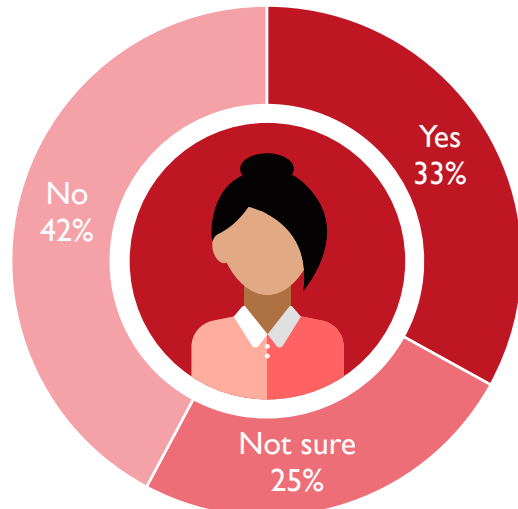
# Polarised opinions across age groups...



Do you feel that there are suitable levels of gender equality and diversity within the built environment sector in Hong Kong?



More younger female respondents think that the levels of gender equality should be enhanced



58% of male respondents who are over 45 think there is already sufficient gender equality and diversity

# Why?...We are losing females too soon...

More support from the private and public sectors is needed to avoid losing female talent once they become working mothers in Hong Kong.

Labour force participation rate for females in HK is only **50%**

**30% exit the workforce** due to caring responsibilities



**More than 50% of employers** said they would not hire women with children

Only **24% of board members** are female in the **top 50 companies** on the **Hang Seng Index**

**Statutory Maternity leave is often inadequate**

HK	Australia	UK
14 weeks	18 weeks	26 weeks

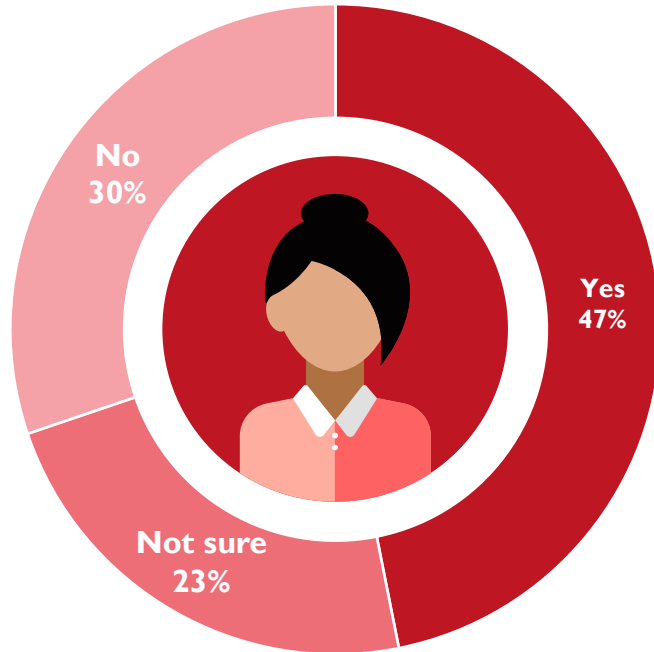




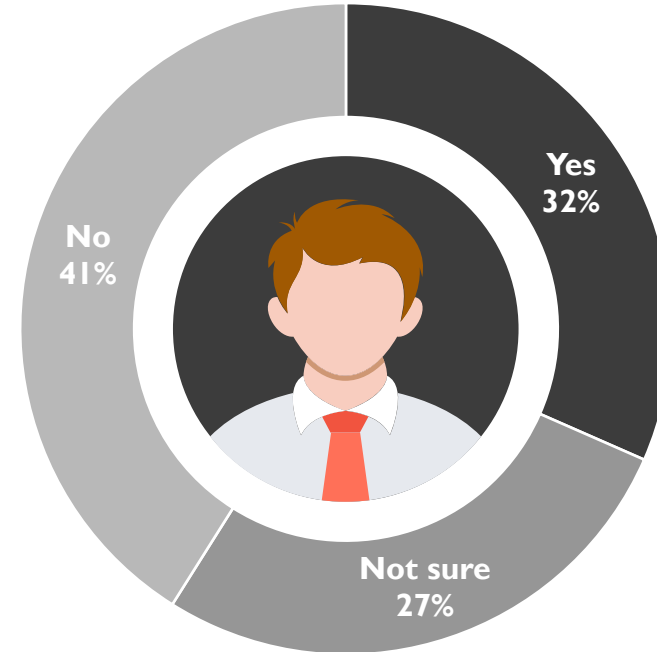
# ...and a big factor is when females have children...

Do you feel that having a family negatively affects a woman's career in the built environment sector?

47% of the female respondents think that their career is **negatively affected by have a family**, especially in **advisory and consulting industry (54%)**



No  
41%

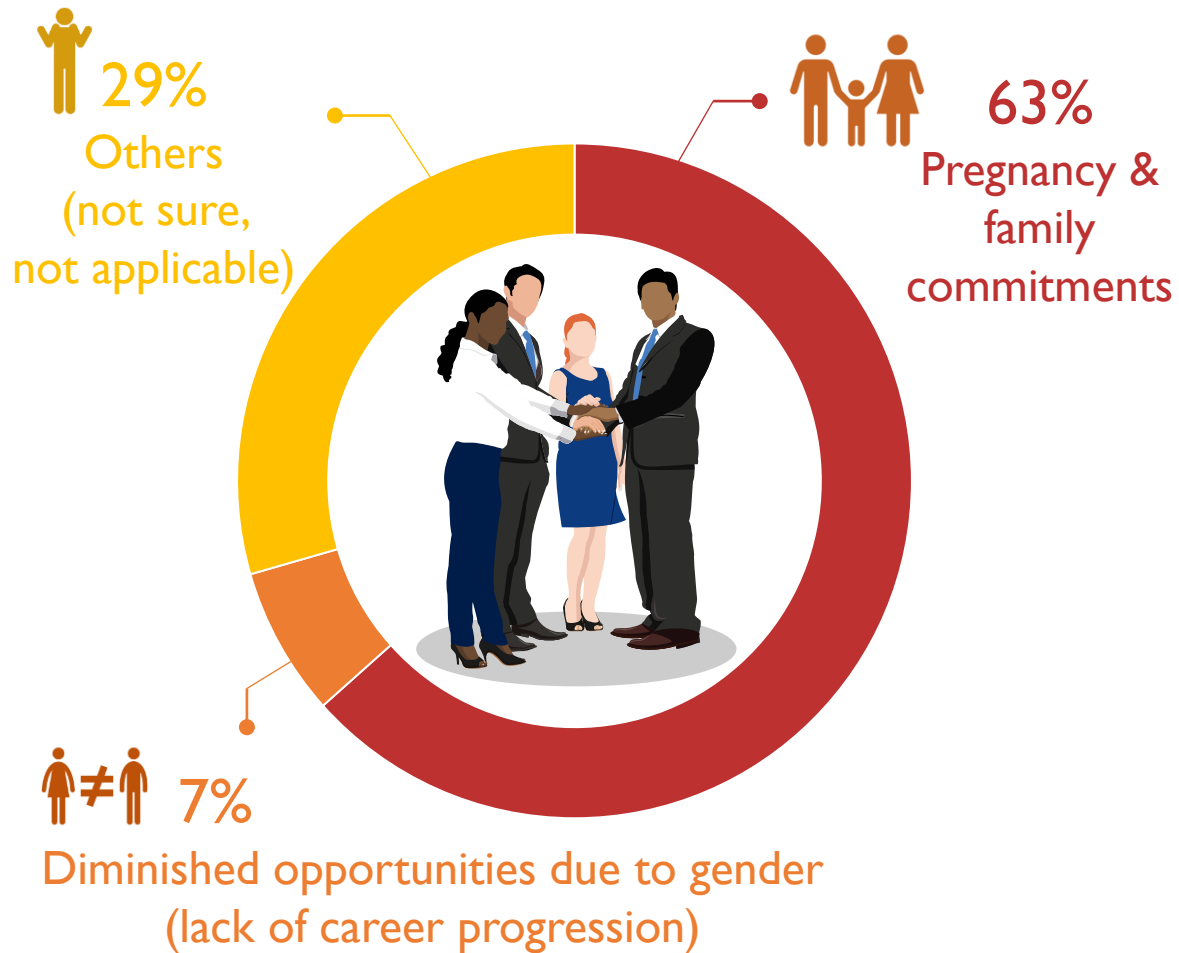


41% of the male respondents think that a woman's career is **not negatively affected** by having a family, especially in **engineering & design (25%)** and **construction industry (14%)**



# So...why are females leaving industry early?

What are the main reasons for women working in the built environment sector in Hong Kong for exiting their career early?



“ **Inability for work / life balance.** Lack of paternity leave and **traditional expectations** that they remain the primary care giver.

**25-34, Construction** ”



“ **Low salary and promotion opportunity when re-enter the business after career break** due to having children.



**45-54, Property** ”





# What other barriers exist?

What examples of gender inequality have you personally encountered or witnessed in the built environment sector in Hong Kong? \*

	Female (no. of responses)		Male (no. of responses)	
1 <sup>st</sup>	Diminished opportunities for promotion due to gender	39	<b>None noted</b>	<b>44</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Unequal workplace treatment due to gender	37	Diminished opportunities for promotion due to gender	24
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Lower salary due to gender	34	Unequal workplace treatment due to gender	18
4 <sup>th</sup>	None noted	29	Sexual Harassment	15
5 <sup>th</sup>	Sexual Harassment	21	Lower salary due to gender	13

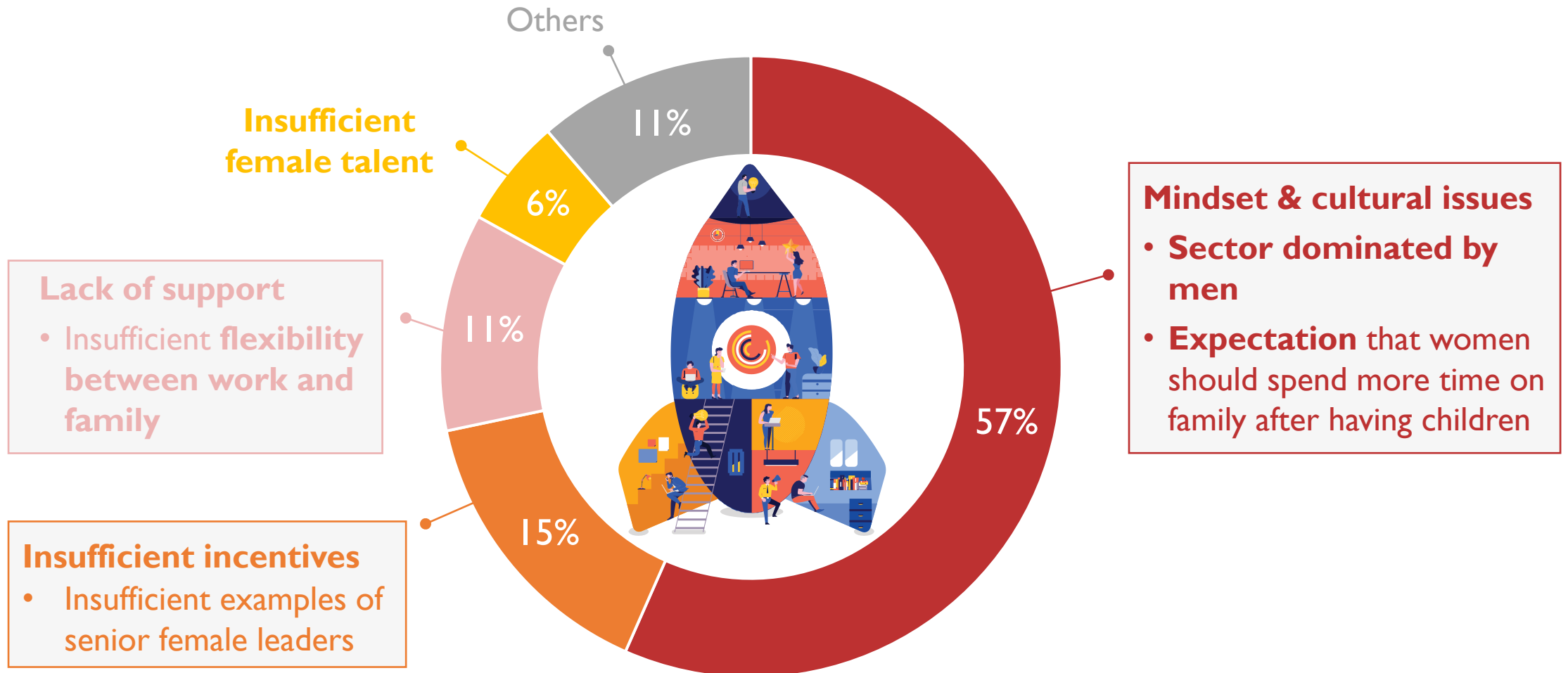
\* Respondents allowed multiple responses





# Old-school mindsets & resistance to change...

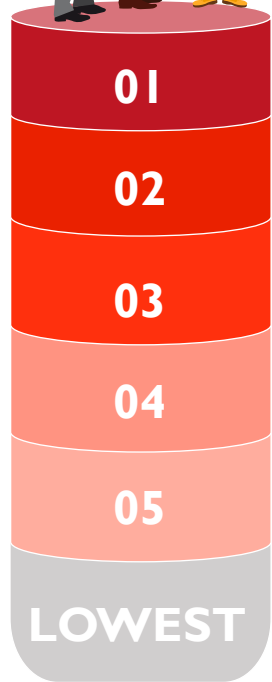
What gets in the way of achieving diversity, equality, and inclusion in the built environment sector in Hong Kong?





# Raising awareness is critical...

How important, if at all, is gender equality to the company you work for?



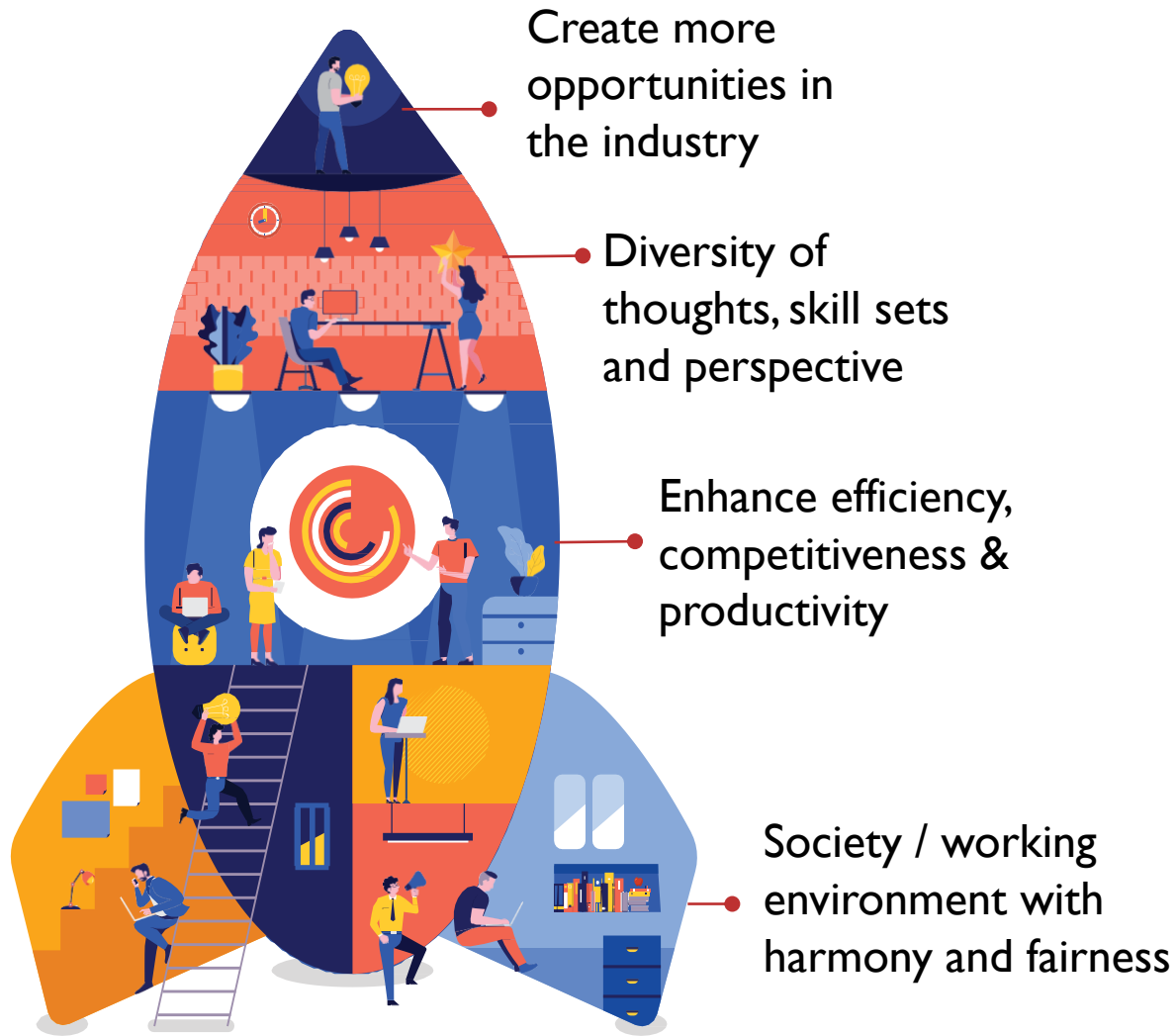
Industry	Awareness of gender equality	Number of respondents (out of 217)
Subcontractor / supplier & investor	100%	4
Engineering and design	80%	59
Others	67%	13
Owner occupied	67%	3
Advisory and consulting	66%	79
Construction	58%	31

Overall awareness of gender equality in built environment is **69%**





# Gender diversity to drive industry development...



“ **Balanced thoughts and decisions based on gender-respected approach.** Half men half women in the world, why not to have the same balance in the organization?

**35-44,  
Engineering and design** ”



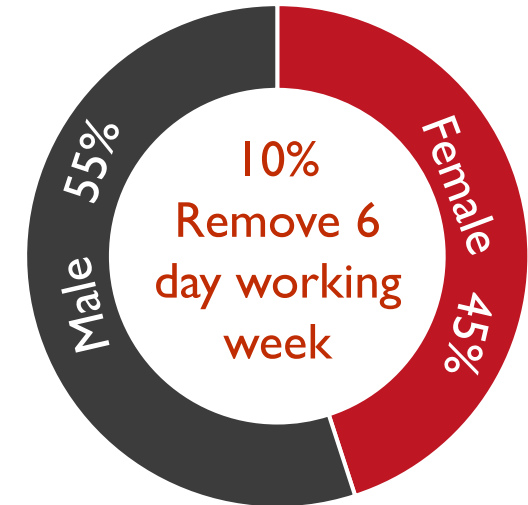
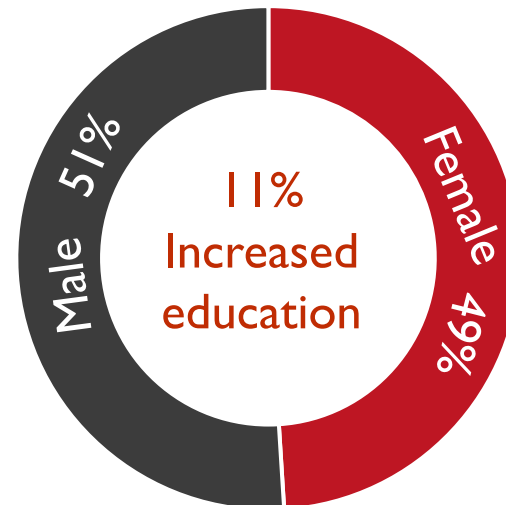
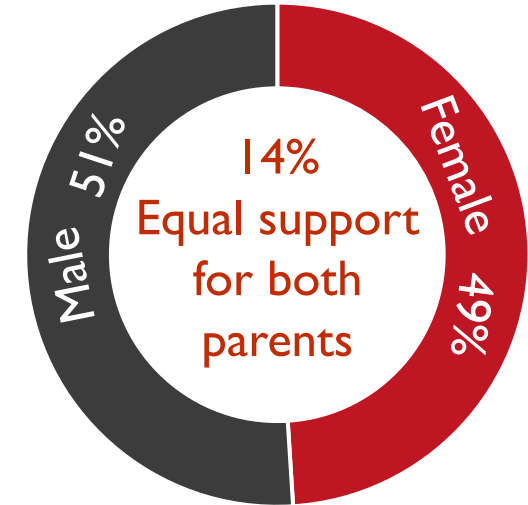
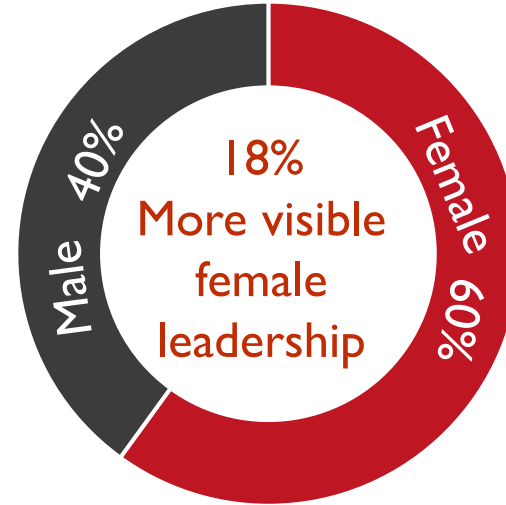
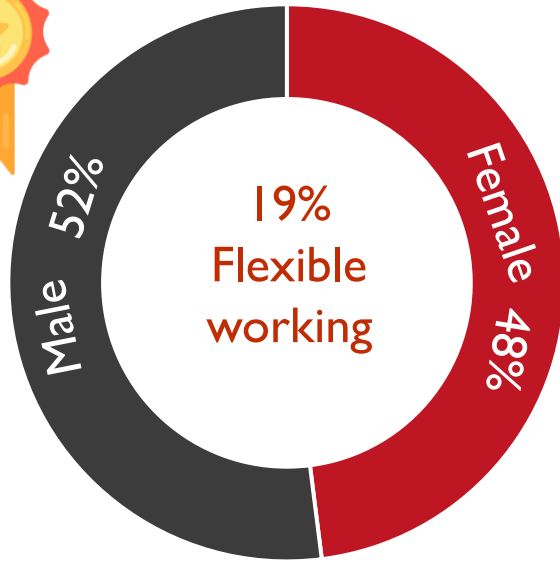
“ More balanced and diverse management, thought leadership, innovation and possibly **overcome labour and skills shortages**

**45-54,  
Advisory and consulting** ”





# What can be done to improve the landscape...



\* Respondents allowed multiple responses

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**The Gender Diversity in the Built Environment Survey results were released on 11 November 2021 at an AustCham event:  
*Built to Last - Championing Gender Equality and Diversity in the Built Environment***

**For more information about the survey or the event, contact:**

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