Women in Construction
2018 At a glance

A LONG WAY TO GO:
Women account for less than 3% of construction trades workers in Australia. This compares to 51% of the non-construction workforce.

<3%  51%

30 YEARS IN ARREARS:
There are no clear signs of a turnaround. Female participation was higher in 1987 than it was in most of the years since.

1987  TODAY

GLIMMER OF HOPE:
The female % of carpentry and electrical apprentices has been rising steadily since 2005 — growing 120% and 75% respectively.

120%  75%

ON THE EDGE OF GLORY:
The trades where women are found more easily are generally ancillary roles: crane chasing, surveyor’s assistant, line marking and signwriting.

HARD TO SEE IN THE TOP THREE:
Electricians, carpenters and plumbers account for a third of all construction trades workers. Less than 1% of them are women.
12TH PLACE IN THE PARTICIPATION RACE:
Most countries do poorly, but we do more poorly than most — ranking 12th out of 15 countries on female participation rates.

12% LESS

2ND PLACE IN THE COMPLETION RACE:
Female completion rates for apprenticeships are typically 12% lower than for men.

25% 10%

SISTERS ARE DOING IT FOR THEMSELVES:
The women who are in construction are 2.5x as likely to own and run their own business than women not in construction.

60% 38%

IN GOOD COMPANY:
Female construction owner-managers are also much more likely to employ other people in their business than their male counterparts (60% vs. 38%).