



**Australian Postgraduate Research Outcomes and Careers Project  
(APROC): High-level findings**

Ruth Kamrowski: [r.kamrowski@griffith.edu.au](mailto:r.kamrowski@griffith.edu.au)



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Griffith University acknowledges the people who are the Traditional Custodians of the land. We pay respect to the Elders, past and present, and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.



Together, Sid Domic



### Survey response

**1,416** respondents  
**41%** response rate  
**32%** of all HDR graduates  
reconnected with



### Employment status



#### One-year post-graduation

90% employed/self-employed (78% FT)

#### Currently

85% employed/self-employed (83% FT)

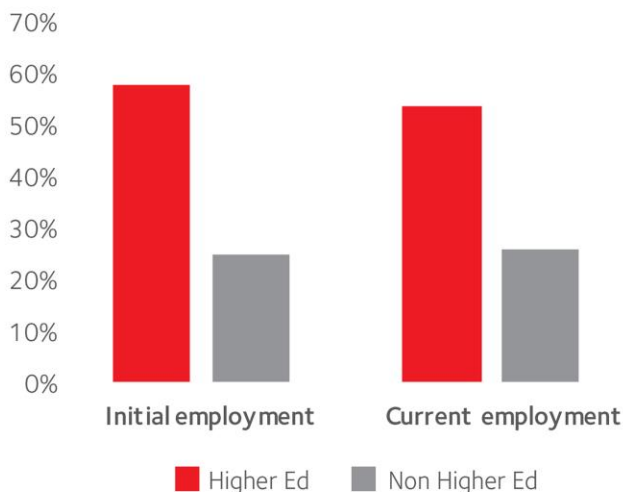
#### 'Appropriate' employment

83% found what they considered to be 'appropriate' employment within two years of completion or were already employed in an 'appropriate' role.

### Sector employment



Employed graduates predominately worked in the 'Higher Education/Academia' sector both initially (58%) and currently (54%). However, a significant proportion of graduates worked outside Higher Ed, both initially (25%) and currently (26%).



### Annual earnings



#### Initial employment earnings

≥ 2017 national average wage  
(Median earnings: \$60-80k)

#### Current employment earnings

> 2017 national average wage  
(Median earnings: \$80-100k)

### Graduate perceptions



#### Satisfaction with HDR experience

85% satisfied/very satisfied

#### 'I believe my HDR qualification has been valuable for my career'

85% agreed

# 18 Months In

## Exploring the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Australian research workforce

Australia's research workforce has gone through a tough 18 months. Since the Covid-19 pandemic hit in early 2020, we've seen significant academic job losses, major changes to teaching practices, and a highly uncertain workforce horizon.

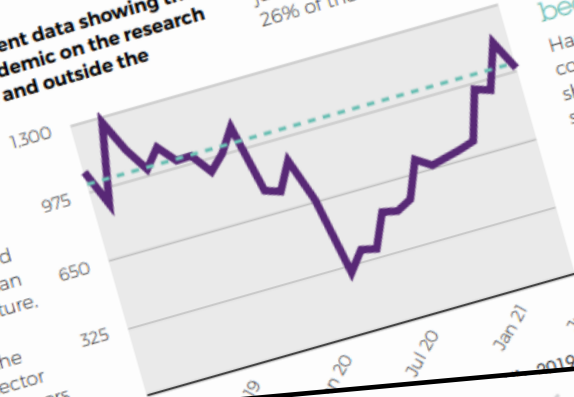
**But more data is needed to properly understand these changes.**

**In this brief update we present data showing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the research labour market both inside and outside the Australian higher education sector.**

By better understanding research labour force trends, we hope that students, educators and key decision makers can better plan for the future, and work towards a better fit between the higher education sector and other users

### Fewer ads

Comparing academic job advertisements in 2019, 2020 and the first half of 2021 reveals the impact of the pandemic, and the move towards recovery. In particular, after an average of 1,022 academic roles were advertised in the Australian Higher Education sector each year in 2019, the academic job market bottomed out in June 2020, with just 290 roles advertised in April. This is just 26% of the figure the previous April.



### But a rebound beckons

Happily, the contraction in short lived academic job postings has reached 91% in June 2020, in June 2021. While the advertising cover the job posted about

## Being a Student During the Pandemic

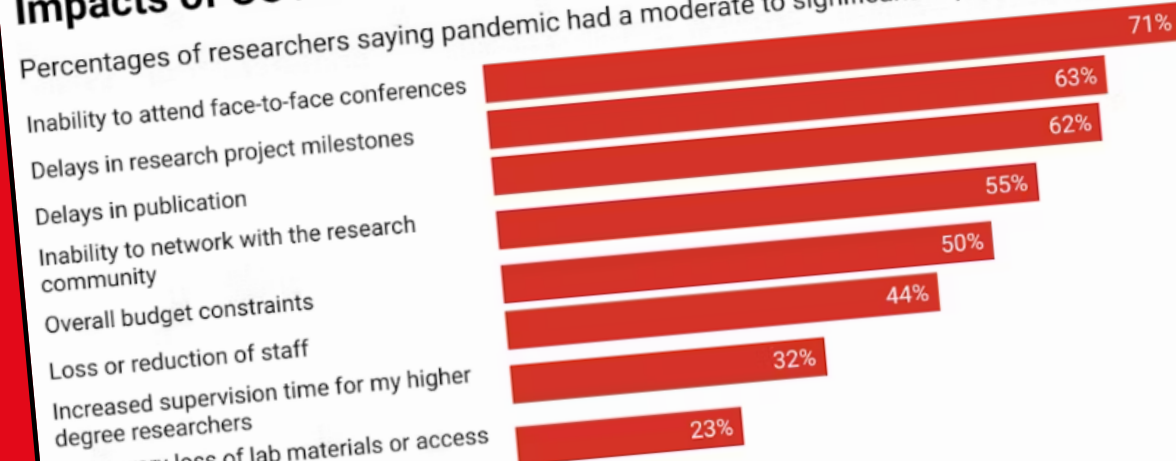
- Results from SERU graduate surveys
- Discussion and leadership

Berkeley Center for Studies in Higher Education UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA DRIVE

COVID-19 has reduced the likelihood that I will graduate with my PhD at all

## Impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on researchers

Percentages of researchers saying pandemic had a moderate to significant impact on activities



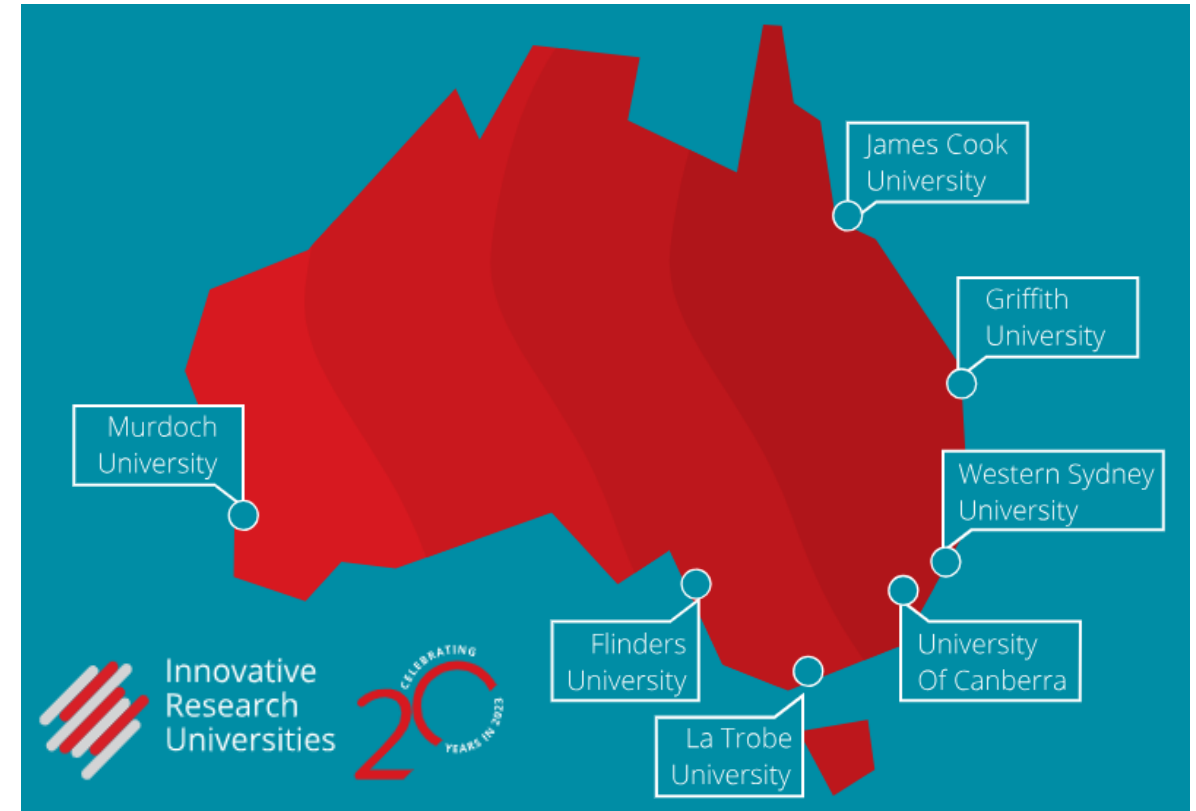
# SO, YOU'RE GRADUATING YOUR PhD IN A PANDEMIC. WHAT'S NEXT?

FRIDAY 29 MAY 12PM - 1 PM (AEST) WEBINAR

HOSTED BY APRIL NTERN THE THESIS WHISPERER

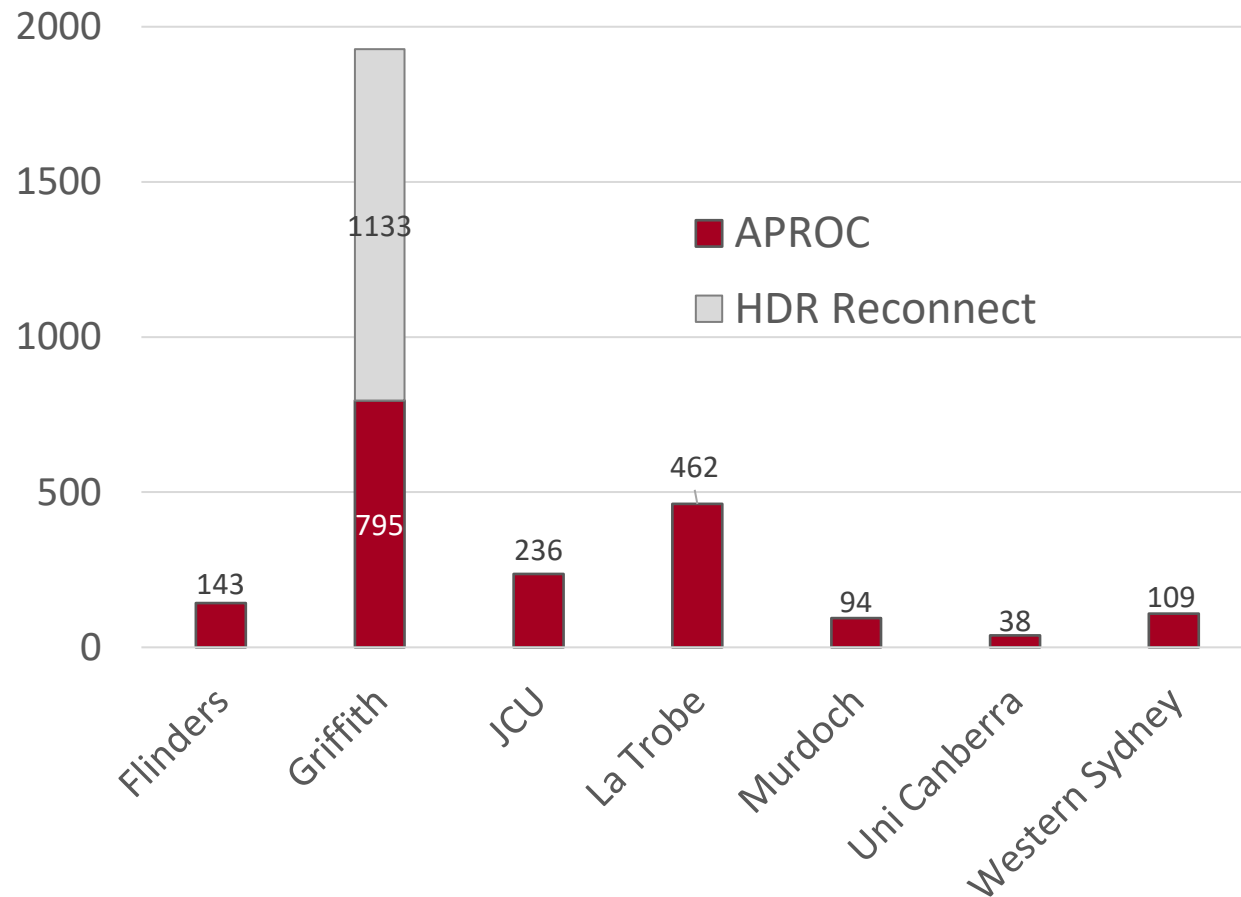
# Australian Postgraduate Research Outcomes and Career Pathways Project (APROC)

- Online survey built on HDR Reconnect to gather up to date employment outcomes data and expanded to examine potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Scope widened to include the other six universities of the Innovative Research Universities Group
- Each institution responsible for recruitment of own graduates. At Griffith, direct email, social media ads and email invitation via principal supervisor used.
- Recruitment took place from Oct 2023 to Oct 2024.



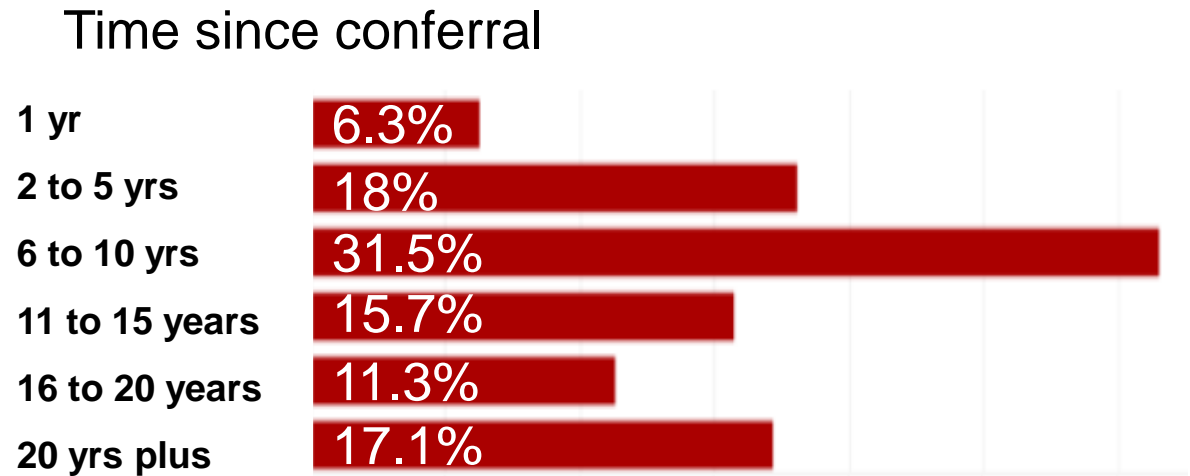
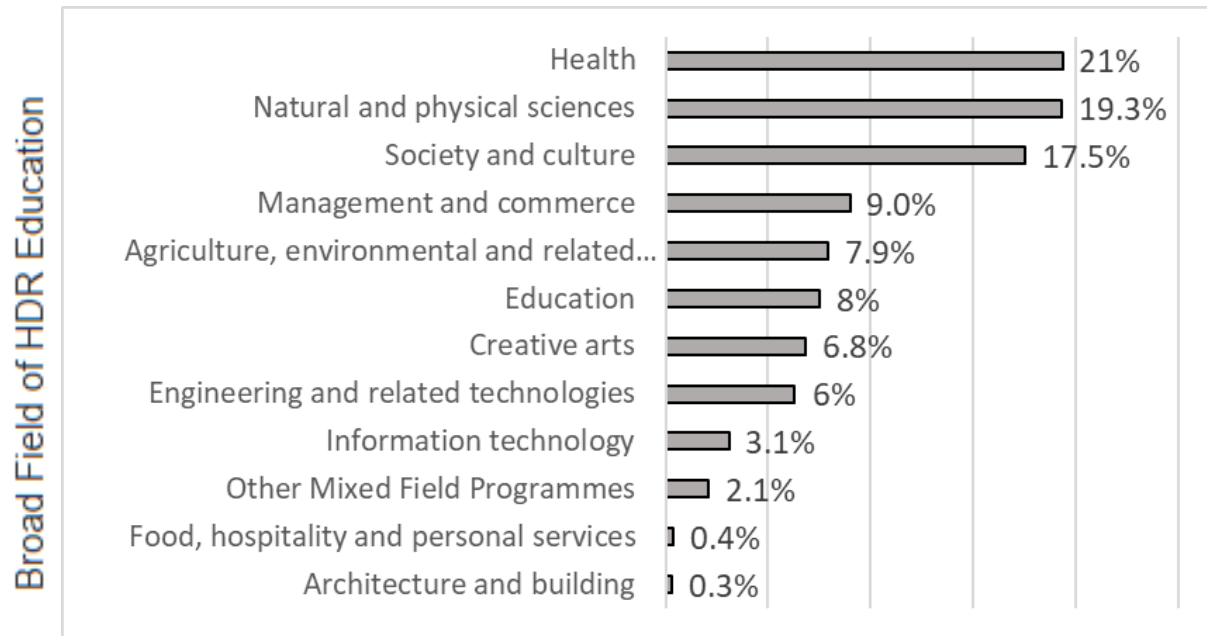
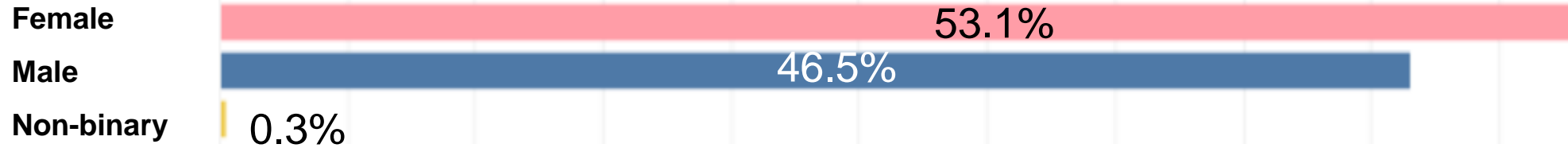
# Response

- 1877 HDR graduates participated in APROC. Combining the data with HDR reconnect respondents who did not complete APROC gave a final dataset comprised of 3010 respondents.



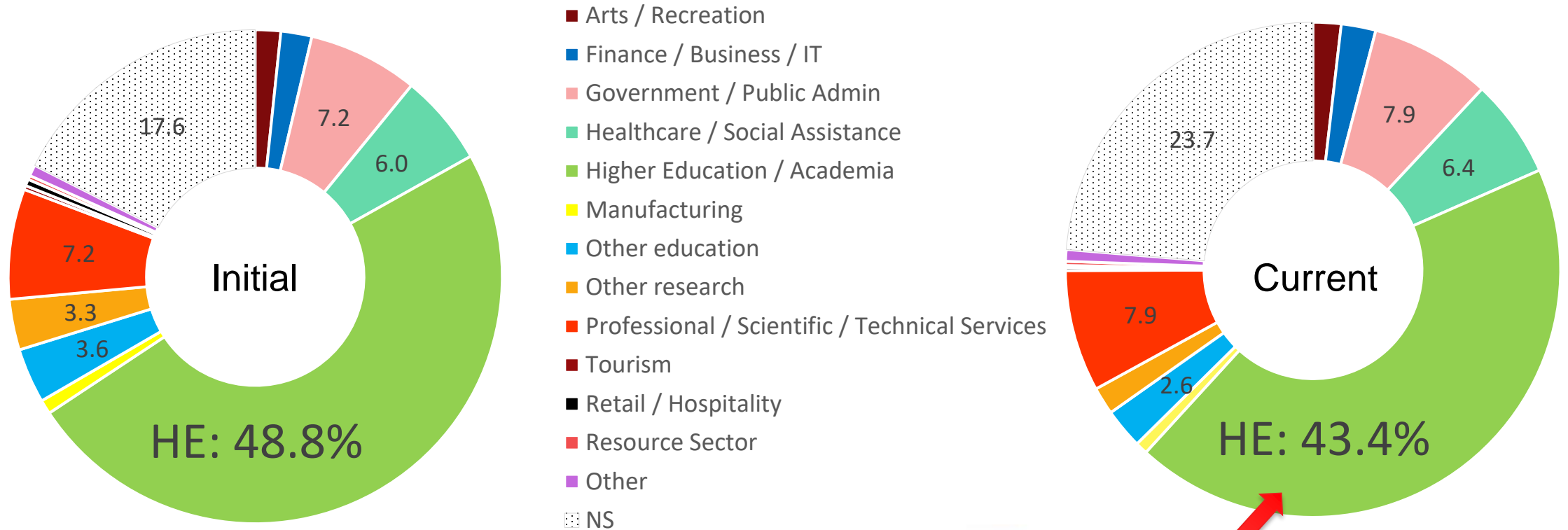
- The 1928 Griffith respondents represent 30.6% of all Griffith HDR graduates.
- The Griffith data are representative of the Griffith HDR graduate population (across faculty, type of qualification and number of graduates by year)

# APROC Demographics

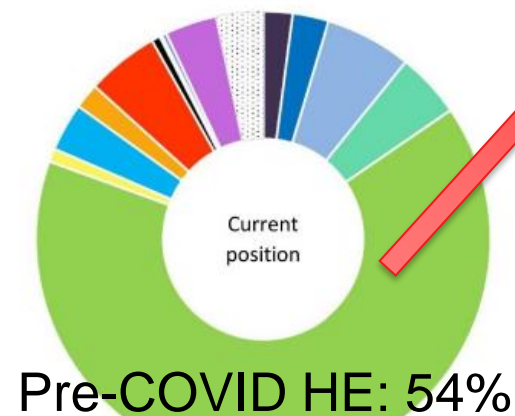




# Employment Sector (all respondents)



The proportion of HDR graduates 'currently employed' in Higher Education has **reduced** compared to pre-COVID study





# Employment Sector (Employed Graduates)

	Time Since Conferral	APROC (%) <u>POST-COVID</u>	HDR Reconnect (%) <u>PRE-COVID</u>	Difference pre- and post-COVID
<b>Initial Employment</b>	2-5 years	48	69	-21
	6-10 years	60	65	-5
	11-15 years	63	64	-1
	16-20 years	58	61	-3
	20 plus years	54	-	
<b>Current Employment</b>	2-5 years	57	68	-11
	6-10 years	57	61	-4
	11-15 years	58	65	-7
	16-20 years	59	63	-4
	20 plus years	58	-	

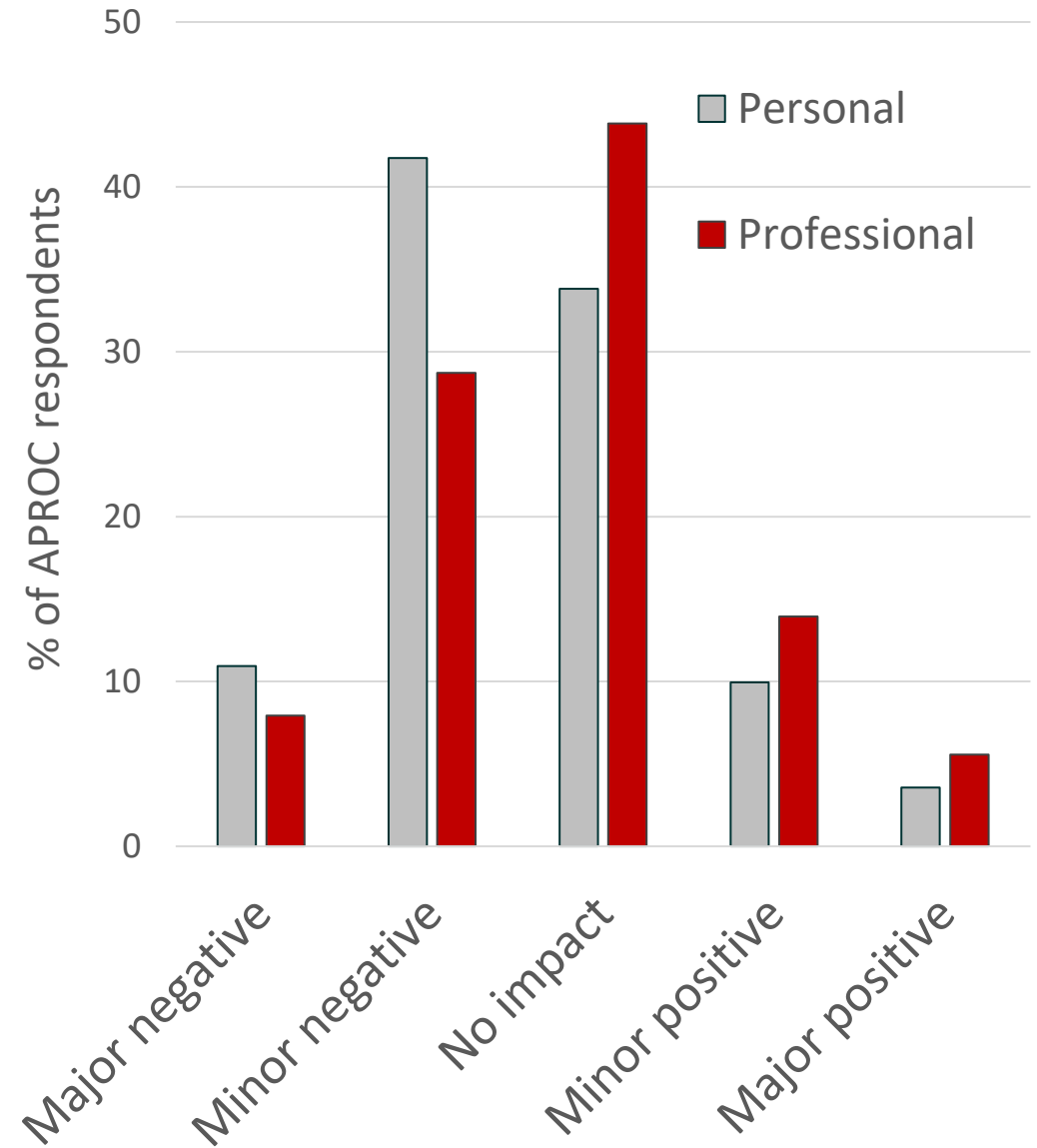
Percentage of survey respondents initially and currently employed in higher education institutions, by time since conferral.

# Reported COVID Impact

To what extent has the COVID-19 pandemic affected you....?

- More than half of respondents (53%) reported a negative personal impact.
- Significant minority (37%) reported a negative professional impact.

Graduates 2-5 years post-conferral reported more negative impact than the other cohorts (negative personal: 60%; negative professional: 45%)





# Employment Outcomes – all respondents

Measure	Pre-COVID	APROC	Comparison
<b>Current Employment Status</b>			
Employed & Self-employed	85%	80.1%	Slight decrease
Unemployed	4%	1.5%	Slight decrease
<b>Current Contact Type</b>			
Fulltime	83%	80.4%	Slight decrease
Fulltime Permanent	59.9%	51.2%	Marked decrease
<b>Time to 'Appropriate Employment'</b>			
Within 12 months	79.3%	78%	Not much change
2+ years	4.2%	5%	Slight increase
Still looking	11.1%	6%	Marked decrease

# Employment Outcomes – Graduates 0-5 years post-conferral

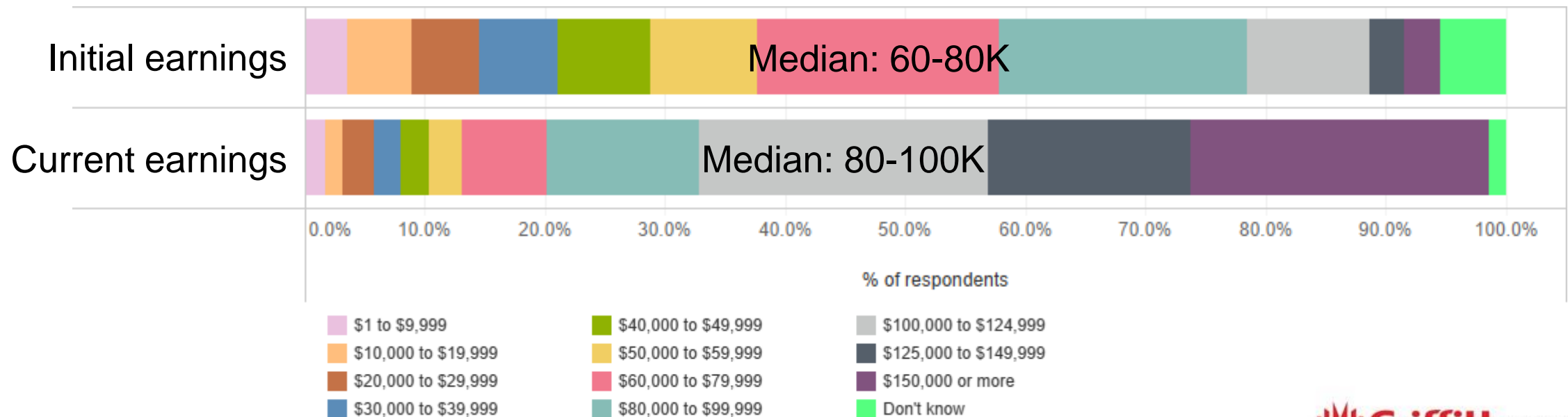
Measure	Pre-COVID	APROC	Comparison
<b>Current Employment Status</b>			
Employed & Self-employed	84.4%	85.4%	Slight increase
Unemployed	7.6%	3.4%	Marked decrease
Further study	0.7%	6.2%	Marked increase
<b>Current Contact Type</b>			
Fulltime	80.4%	72.4%	Marked decrease
Fulltime Permanent	52.3%	42.1%	Marked decrease
<b>Time to 'Appropriate Employment'</b>			
Within 12 months	77.7%	78%	Slight increase
Still looking	15.6%	8%	Marked decrease
Already employed	19.2%	45%	Substantial increase!



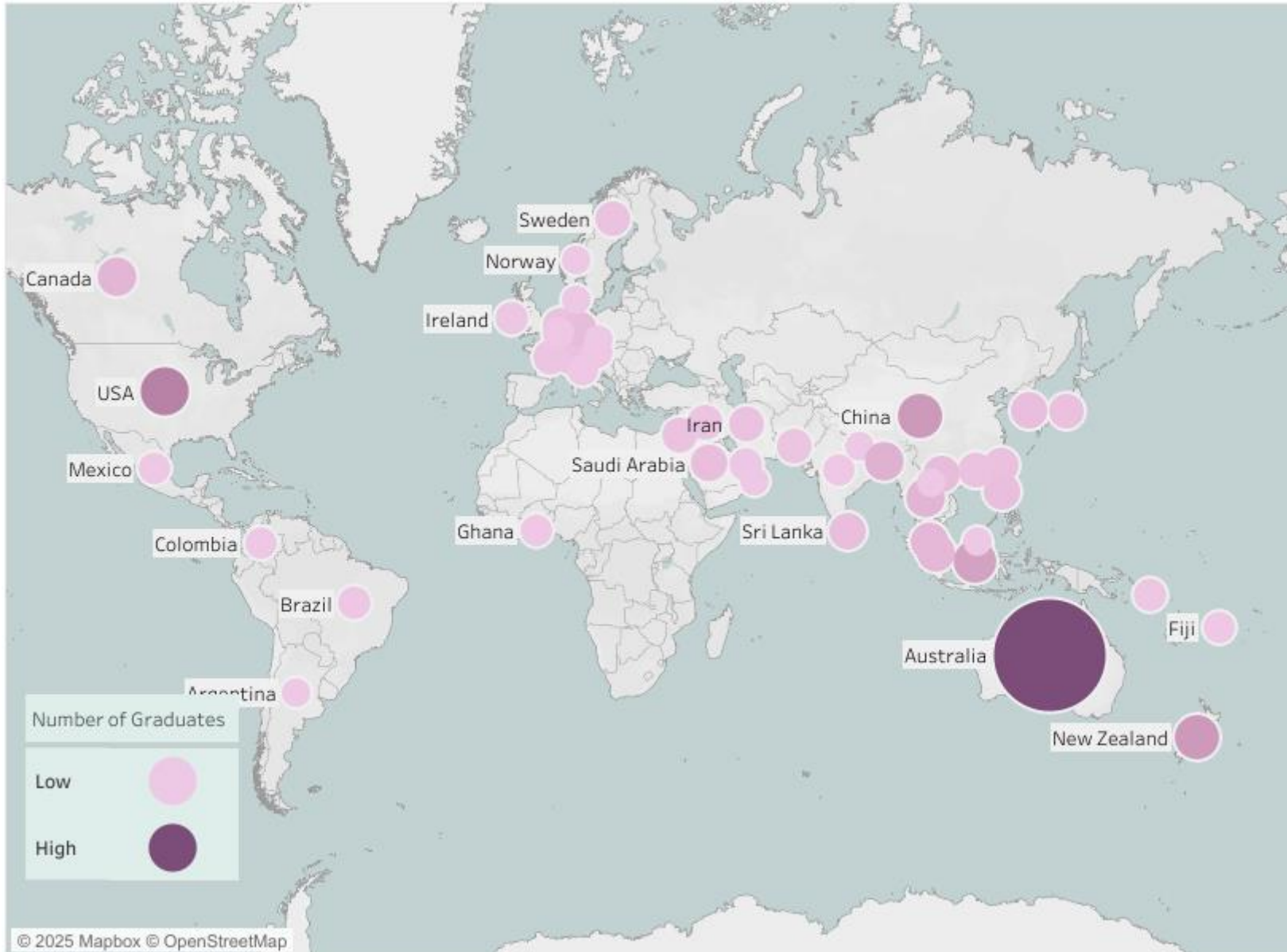
# Salary

ABS: 2024 National Average wage: \$76,913

- Median reported salary:
  - Initial: equal to or higher than the national average annual wage
    - Higher than reported nationally for graduates of undergraduate degrees
  - Current: higher than the national average annual wage
  - Earnings significantly increased between initial and current employment



# Country of employment



- Most employed HDR graduates remained in Australia, both for their initial (76.7%) and current employment (79.3%; shown here).
- Meaning, most of the expertise developed by graduates during their HDR training should be available to benefit Australia.

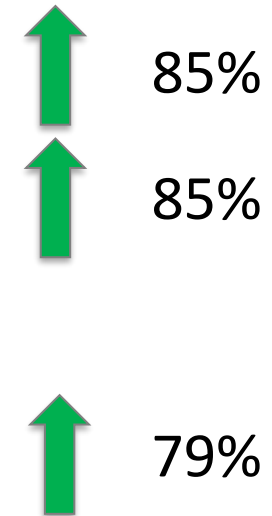
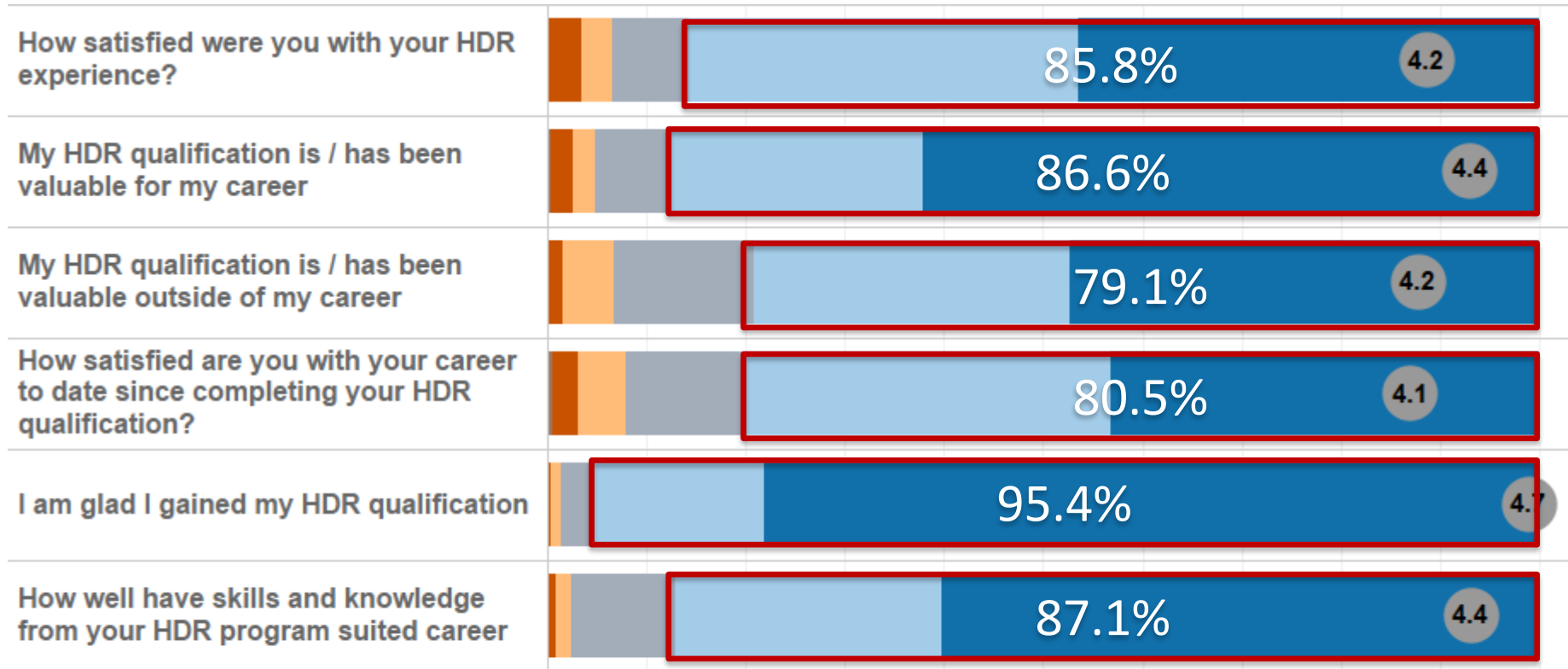


# Graduate Perceptions

- How satisfied were you with your HDR experience?
- My HDR qualification is/has been valuable for my career
- My HDR qualification is/has been valuable for me in areas other than my career
- How satisfied are you with your career to date since completing your HDR qualification?
- I am glad I gained my HDR qualification
- How well have the skills and knowledge from your HDR program suited your career?

# Graduate Perceptions

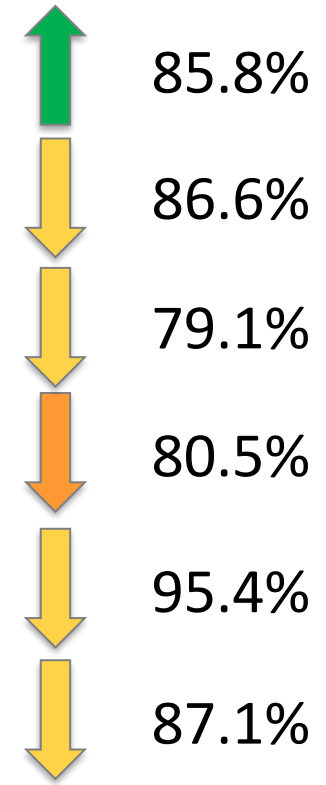
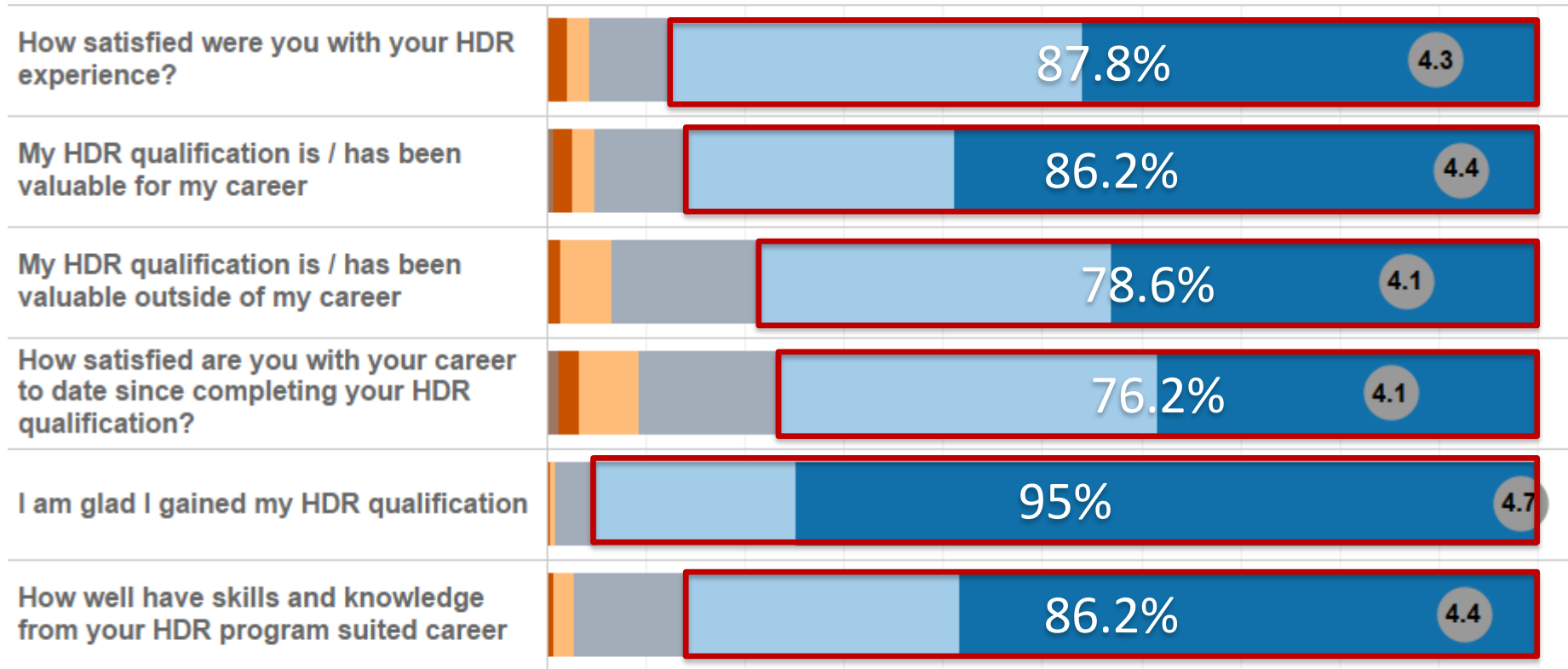
## Comparison to Pre-COVID Study



- Strongly Agree - Very Satisfied - Very well suited
- Agree - Satisfied - Well suited
- Neutral - Somewhat suited
- Disagree - Unsatisfied - Not well suited
- Strongly Disagree - Very Unsatisfied - Not suited at all
- N/A



# Graduate Perceptions *Graduates 0-5 years post-conferral*



- Strongly Agree - Very Satisfied - Very well suited
- Agree - Satisfied - Well suited
- Neutral - Somewhat suited
- Disagree - Unsatisfied - Not well suited
- Strongly Disagree - Very Unsatisfied - Not suited at all
- N/A

Comparison to all APROC respondents

# What can we take from these results?

- **Reassuring!** Both objective employment outcomes and graduate perceptions about their HDR and career indicate little residual impact of the COVID-19 pandemic for HDR graduates
- Graduates (0-5 years post conferral) report less opportunity for employment in higher education, increases in further study, decreases in fulltime and fulltime-permanent positions, and a larger COVID-impact.
- **However:** Graduates (0-5 years post conferral) report decreased unemployment, a substantial increase in how many found appropriate employment before conferral, and similar levels of satisfaction with their HDR and career as other cohorts.

**Key insight: more recent HDR graduates have gone onto further study, and less HDR graduates, work in higher education → need to prepare current and prospective HDRs for a range of career pathways**

# How Griffith is using the project data:

- We have created an interactive [project website](#) to be a resource to inform prospective and current HDR candidates of likely employment and career outcomes
- Alumni will be offered more avenues for reengagement, including networking opportunities, invitations to events and regular alumni news communications
- HDR graduates have signed up to become university mentors
- De-identified feedback is being shared with relevant university departments, to guide and improve future research training
- Employment outcome data is being used to tailor professional development activities provided to current HDR candidates to help prepare them for a range of potential career pathways
- Avenues for increased industry engagement through graduate collaborations are being explored





# Other data

- Given my change in position, analysis of the APROC findings to date have been limited to high-level findings.

- **However**, there is plenty of data as yet unexplored! Including:

- Narrow field of education
- For graduates going on to further study: what/why are you studying?
- Length of fixed term contract
- Employment fraction for PT work
- For each role, following items mostly followed by open-ended fields 'Please explain':
  - Was this position within your field of HDR education?
  - Did this position require an HDR qualification?
  - Did this position require/utilise skills and/or knowledge you acquired during your HDR
  - How did you find out about this position?
  - Do you feel this position is/was a useful step along your desired career path?
  - How satisfied/happy were you in this position?
  - Why did this position end?
- What were the highlights/best parts of your HDR experience?
- When you commenced your HDR program, what were your career plans/aspirations?
- When you finished your HDR program had your career plans, or other aspirations, changed?
- When you finished your HDR program, what were your career plans or other aspirations?
- Are there any skills or training activities that you wish had been part of your HDR program?
- What are/were the most useful skills and/or knowledge that you obtained through undertaking your HDR?
- Are you where you thought you would be today?
- Did the COVID-19 pandemic change, or have any impact on:
  - your employment status?
  - Where you live?
  - Your employment sector?
  - Your earnings?
  - Your contract type?
  - The way that you work?
- Given the COVID-19 pandemic, how satisfied are you with your current employment situation?
- Do you have caring responsibilities?
- Did your caring responsibilities change during 2020-2021 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?
- What impact did this change in caring responsibilities have on your employment situation?
- What is your marital status?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell us about how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted you?

For further information,  
contact:

[APROC@griffith.edu.au](mailto:APROC@griffith.edu.au)

# Murdoch University



## Associate Professor Belinda Brown

- **94 respondents**
- Capturing conferral dates from 1979 – 2023
- 53% respondents were conferred in past 10 years

	<b>N (%)</b>
<b>Gender, female</b>	51 (54%)
<b>Degree</b>	
Doctoral	77 (82%)
Masters	12 (13%)
<b>Broad field</b>	
HASS	37 (39%)
Sciences	57 (60%)
<b>Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islanders</b>	1 (1%)
<b>Student type</b>	
Domestic	70 (74%)
International	24 (26%)



## Employment status

### 1 year post-conferral

80% employed/self-employed

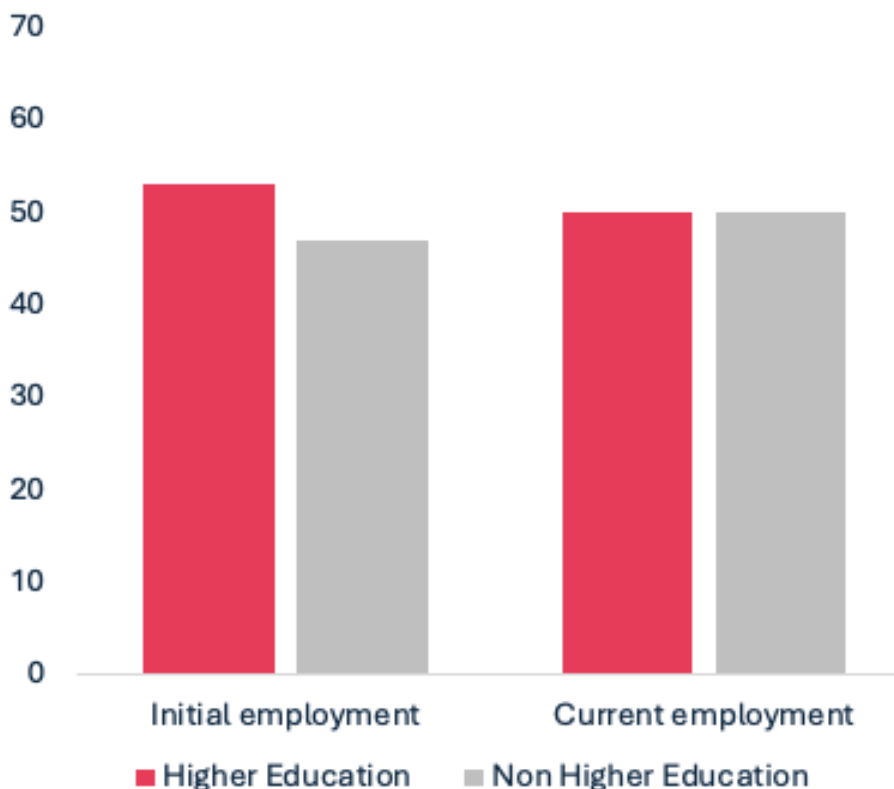
### Currently

77% employed/self-employed

### Current employment earnings

>2024 national average wage  
(median earnings \$90-100k)

## Sector employment



## Graduate perceptions

### Satisfaction with HDR experience

89.8% satisfied/very satisfied

**'I believe my HDR qual has been valuable for my career'**

88.7% agreed

**'How well have skills/knowledge from HDR suited your career'**

86.0% well suited

**'I am glad I gained my HDR qualification'**

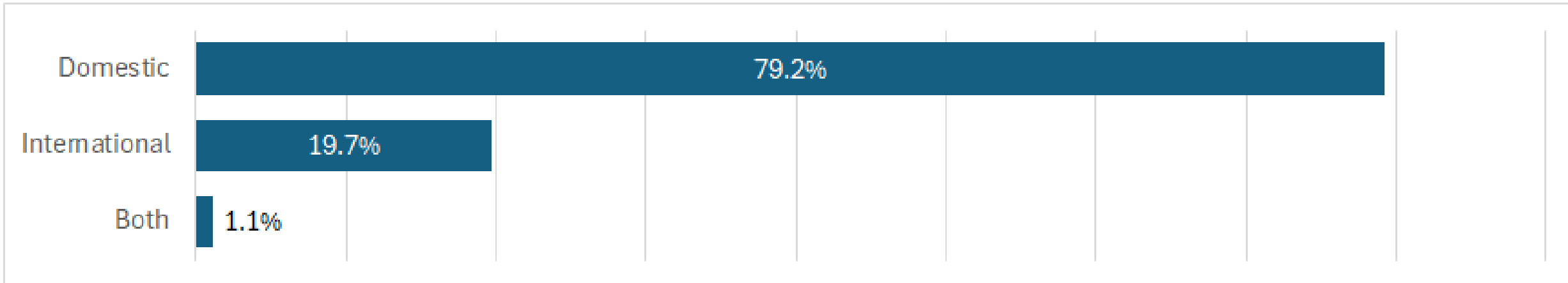
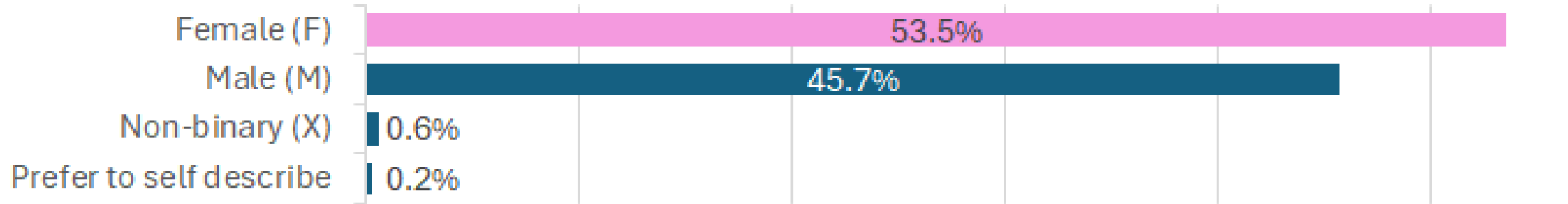
94.9% agreed

# La Trobe University

Rebecca Lubansky

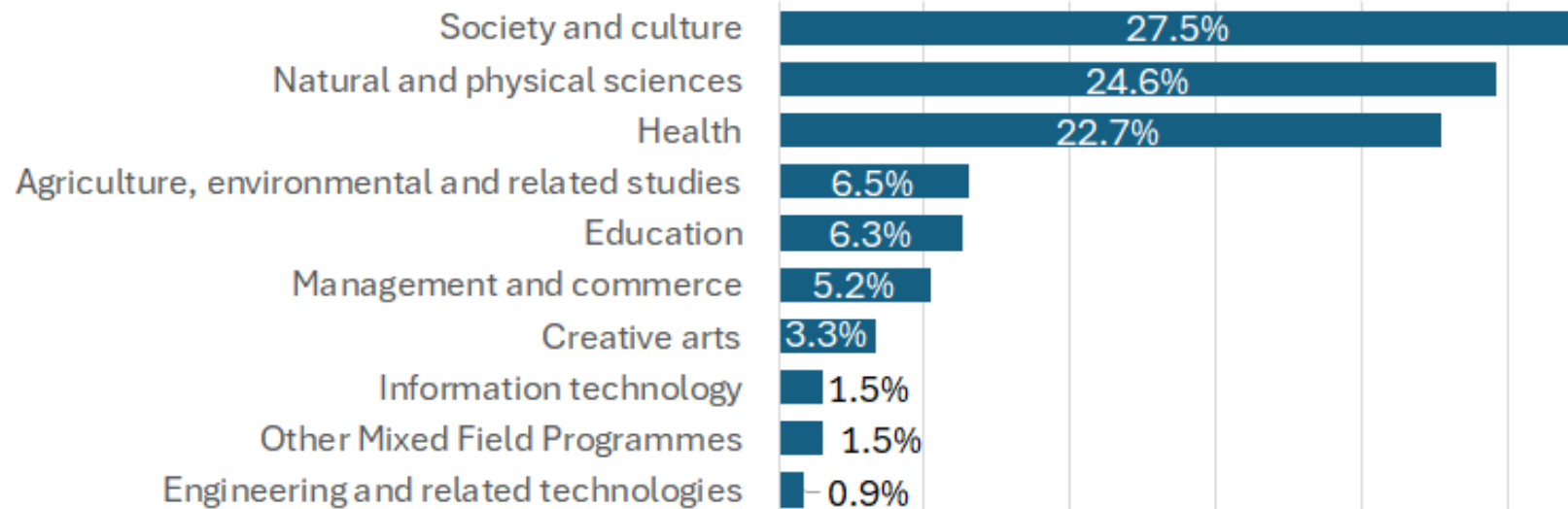
# APROC La Trobe University: Demographics

Conferral year from 1974 to 2023  
462 respondents (11% of all invitees)

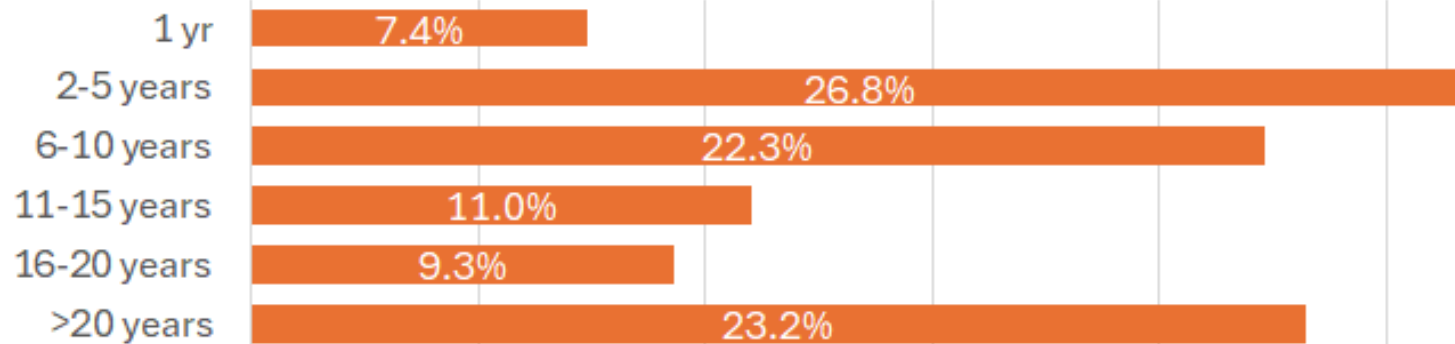


# APROC La Trobe University: Demographics

## Broad field of education

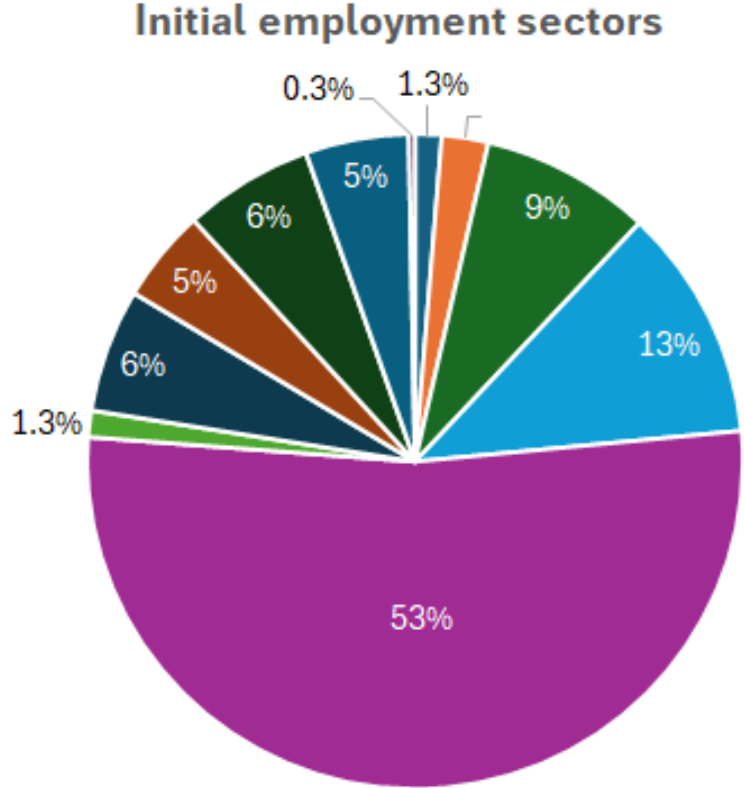


## Time since conferral

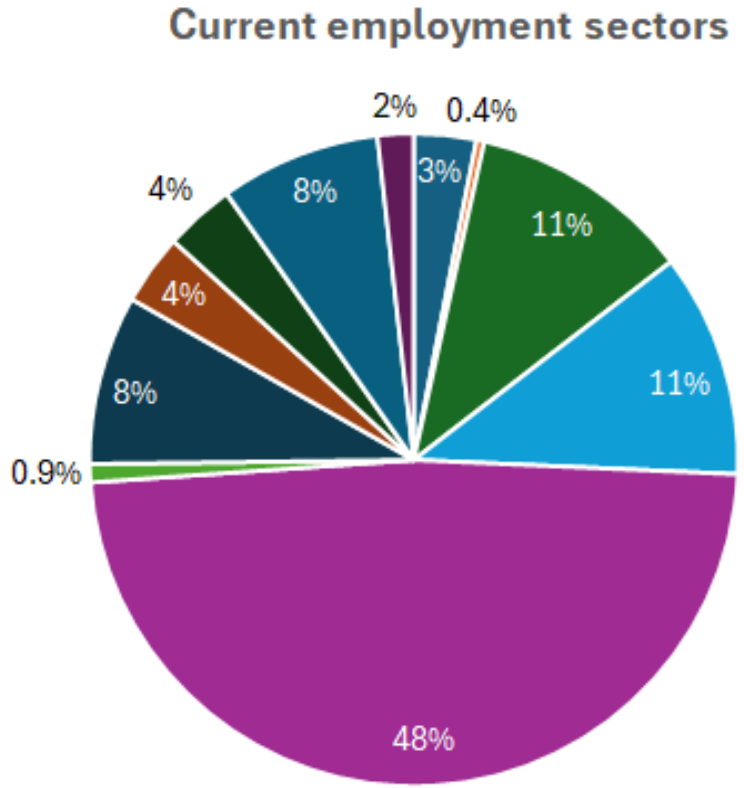




# La Trobe University: employment sector



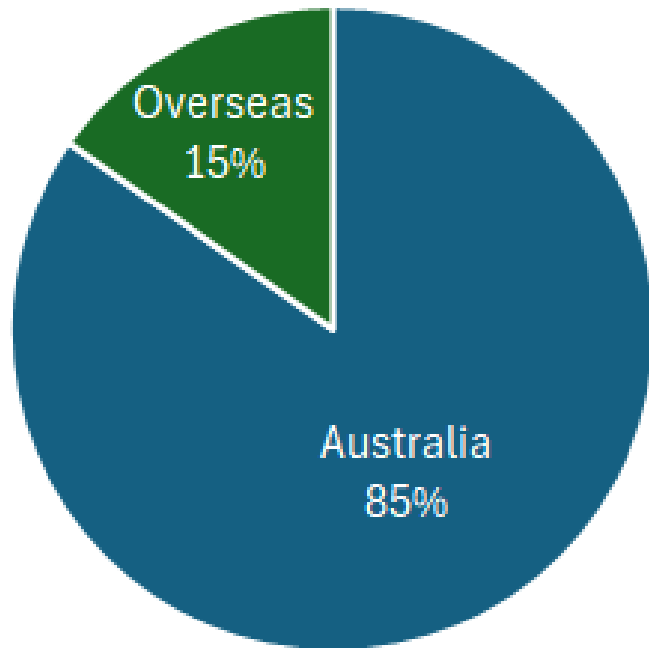
- Arts/Recreation
- Finance/Business/IT
- Government/Public Administration
- Healthcare/Social Assistance
- Higher Education / Academia
- Manufacturing
- Other
- Other Education
- Other Research
- Professional/Scientific/Technical Services
- NS



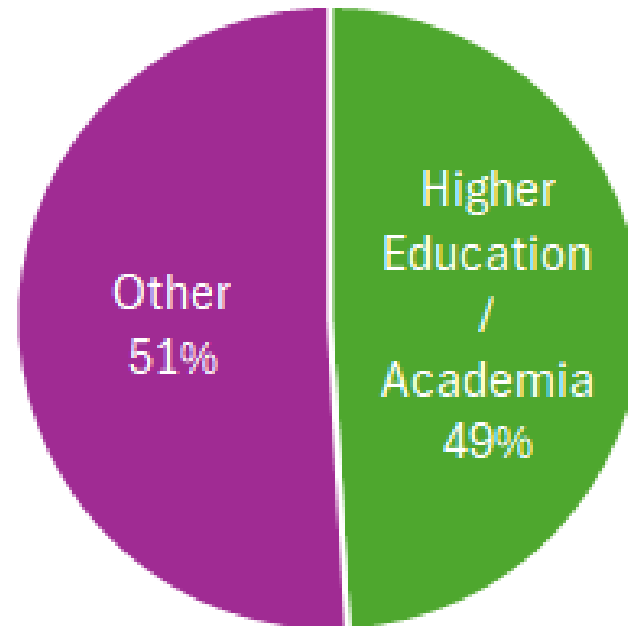
# La Trobe University: current employment

For those currently employed or self-employed who provided info:

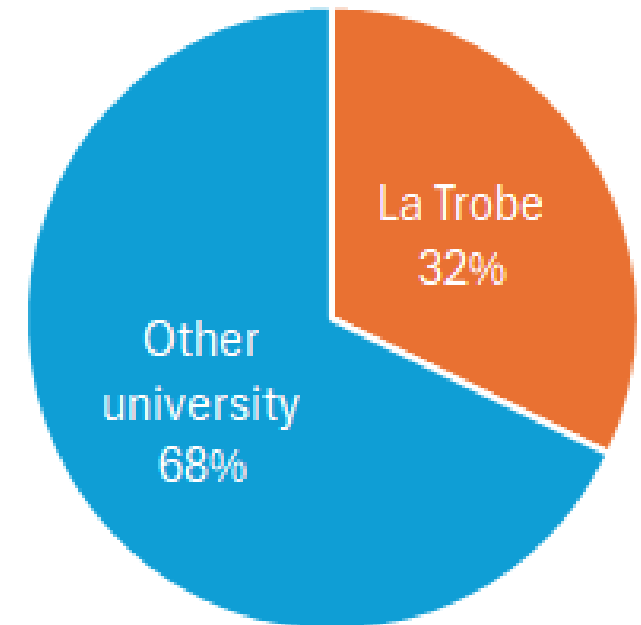
Work location



Sector



Of those in higher education



# How La Trobe plans to use the data

- Review alongside PREQ and current candidate survey to inform actions in Graduate Research Experience & Wellbeing plan
- Use to inform development offerings
- Provide relevant data to schools and other university service areas to inform their activities
- Help us to articulate the value of a graduate research qualification and types of career pathways to potential and current candidates

# Using this information....

- Clear value of an HDR qualification
- Graduate perceptions of HDR quality and satisfaction of their HDR studies
- Career outcomes post-COVID