

Australian women are doing 50% more housework than men. It's creating 'volcanic levels of resentment'

Level 1: Elementary

1 Warmer

a. Discuss these questions.

- Which people in your house do these types of housework?
 - cook
 - clean
 - buy the weekly food
 - look after other family members, e.g. children or the elderly
- In your family, how do you choose who does which kind of housework?
- In the area you live, is the way you choose who does the housework typical? Why / why not?

2 Key words

a. Complete each definition with the correct word from the wordpool. Then find and highlight them in the article to read them in context.

amount

division

domestic chore

dynamic

flexible work

- a boring job that you have to do around the house _____
- how much there is of something _____
- work patterns that can change easily according to the situation _____
- the relationship between people and how they behave with each other _____
- the way something is separated among a group of people _____

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gender norms

generous

parental leave

survey

unpaid labour

6. hard physical or mental work that is done without receiving money _____
7. time that a parent can spend away from work to take care of their baby _____
8. a way to find out people's opinions or behaviour made by asking people questions

9. social and cultural roles that are considered appropriate for men and women _____
10. giving people a lot of money or time in a kind way _____

b. Complete the sentences with words from the previous activity. You might have to change the form of the word.

1. He was angry because his brother got a bigger _____ of money for his birthday.
2. His boss agreed to a(n) _____ schedule so that he could look after his mother.
3. His uncle is very _____ and always helps him pay for things.
4. Many small restaurants save money by using family members as _____.
5. The workers complained about the _____ of labour among staff.
6. Many teenagers have to do different types of _____ before they can go out.
7. According to a recent _____ of 1000 UK families, holidays at home are more popular.
8. Sweden has excellent _____ — they get up to 480 days off work.
9. According to traditional _____, boys like blue, and girls like pink.
10. The _____ of the family changed after the children left for university.

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Australia and New Zealand rank third highest globally for unpaid domestic work done by women, according to the UN data from 2023

Daisy Dumas
06 March, 2025

- 1 This International Women's Day, Meg's* life will feel no less busy than it does on any other day. Like her husband, the 43-year-old from Sydney works five days a week she also has a second job in the evenings. They have three young children, a mortgage and no family in Australia.
- 2 She is not alone. The latest Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (Hilda) survey shows that in 2022, men spent around 12.8 hours a week on housework. 20 years earlier, they did exactly the same amount. The situation for women is worse. Women do 50 per cent more than men (around 18.4 hours). Dr Inga Lass, the report's co-author, found that women thought the division of unpaid labour was unfair.

Gender norms

- 3 "This is not a surprise to me," political economist Prof Elizabeth Hill says of the Hilda findings. She explains that even when a woman has a job and her male partner does not, she still does most of the housework. How much we can earn does not change how work is divided at home. Gender norms have a bigger effect, Lass suggests. "I think it starts with how boys and girls are being raised, and what they're being taught."

Work and home lives

- 4 Before having a baby, women do around the same share of housework and paid work as their male partners, then roles dramatically change. "Having babies just shifts the dynamic within couples so much ... You're at home all the time ... so you start doing all the domestic chores," Meg says.

More flexible work

- 5 Hill says that in Nordic countries where more money is spent on parental leave for both men and women, fathers who care for their babies continue to be involved in childcare years later.
- 6 As well as more generous paid parental leave and childcare systems, Australia needs more flexible work. "We're heading in the right direction, but we need to go much faster, and we need to include all aspects of society," says Hill.

* Name has been changed

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3 Comprehension check

a. Are these sentences True (T) or False (F) according to the article? Correct any that are false.

1. In 2002, men spent around 12.8 hours a week on housework. T / F
2. Women spent around four hours more a week on housework than men. T / F
3. If a man doesn't work but the woman does, the man does most of the housework. T / F
4. When a couple has a baby, the balance of housework changes. T / F
5. Typically, if a father cares for a baby, they don't care for the child as they get older. T / F
6. Australia needs better parental leave and more flexible work. T / F

4 Key language

a. Put the adjectives in brackets into the correct column in the table. The first one has been done for you.

1. Meg's life will feel no less **busy** (busy)
2. 20 years **earlier** (early)
3. The situation for women is **worse** (bad)
4. Gender norms have a **bigger** effect (big)
5. involved in childcare years **later** (late)
6. **more generous** paid parental leave (generous)
7. we need to go much **faster** (fast)

1. One syllable	2. One syllable ending in -e	3. Ending in consonant + vowel + consonant	4. Two syllables ending in -y	5. Two or more syllables	6. Irregular
			<i>busy</i>		

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b. Complete the sentences using the words in bold in the previous activity.

1. Her new sports car is much _____ than his.
2. Canada is _____ than France in size.
3. The weather in Scotland is _____ than in Jamaica.
4. His mother is _____ than his father, so she is normally the one who buys him clothes.
5. Yesterday, he arrived at work at 10 a.m., but his boss arrived _____ than him — 11 a.m.!
6. On Mondays, she has to wake up _____ to take the kids to swimming lessons.
7. My new job is great, but I have a lot to do so my days are _____.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- In the past, people did much more housework, so the difference between genders is not as important now.
- Women will always be the main person to care for children, so they should do the family and domestic chores.

6 In your own words

- a. In pairs or small groups, compare the number of hours that you spend on domestic chores.**
- b. Present your findings to the class. Use adjectives to compare the time spent by each student.**