

# A Fairer Start

## Adjustment and Resilience: Gender Equality Research at RMIT in 2020

FEBRUARY 2021



Gender Equality  
Working Group



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## Acknowledgment of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University. RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present. RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

# BACKGROUND

The United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to tackle some of the most complex and pressing challenges facing the world in the 21st Century. The 17 goals, 169 targets and 232 indicators form part of a broad agenda that provides a set of clear measurable targets to improve sustainability performance globally. These goals were developed based on the pillars of: protecting our natural resources and climate for future generations; ensuring dignity, equality and prosperity; fostering peace and inclusive societies; and promoting partnerships.

RMIT recognises the important role the higher education sector can play not only supporting the SDGs agenda, but also promoting and contributing to the achievement of all 17 Goals. RMIT's innovative and collaborative research environment plays a significant role in progressing research that advances the sustainable development agenda. Gender equality research is a significant research focus at RMIT University.

In 2018 RMIT established a University-wide project to map, measure and communicate the progress the University was making towards the SDGs as part of its commitment to the Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Working groups were established for all 17 SDGs. This report has been commissioned by Working Group #5: Gender Equality. The report focuses on the adjustments and resilience of the RMIT gender equality researcher community specifically in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## GENDER EQUALITY AT RMIT

RMIT has made significant progress towards gender equality as documented in the Sustainability Annual Report 2019. According to this report, women make up over 50% of all staff, and 50% of RMIT governance bodies are represented by women. The University reported 37 research projects focused on gender equality across the University.

RMIT is currently regarded as a leader in gender equity and inclusion through a multitude of institutions and awards. In 2020 the University achieved the top world ranking in Reducing Inequality (SDG #10) in the 2020 Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings. In 2019 RMIT was recognised as a Workplace Gender Equality Agency—Employer of Choice. RMIT has also received a bronze Athena SWAN (Scientific Women's Academic Network) accreditation, which recognises gender equity advancement in higher education and research institutions. These achievements demonstrate RMIT's commitment to gender equality in research, teaching and employment practices.

The Women Researchers' Network at RMIT has undertaken a multi-stage study of their members about their experiences of doing research during the COVID-19 pandemic. This research acknowledges "the immediate and persistent research impacts from COVID-19. The survey data will be used to understand the needs of its members and shape WRN priorities to better support research productivity and participation".

## 2020 AT RMIT

It is undeniable that 2020 has been a most unexpected and tumultuous year for Australia and the world. Melbournians started the year sheltering indoors to escape breathing in smoke as devastating bushfires burnt across the state. The COVID-19 global pandemic began soon after in March 2020, and has affected communities around the world in different, complex ways. As global communities rallied and contributed to communal efforts to slow or stop the spread of the virus, Melbournians did their part, but were struck with a second wave of the virus in the middle of the year. At the same time, communities around the world were motivated to protest police brutality and deaths in custody that disproportionately impact people of colour.

<sup>1</sup> Women Researchers' Network. (2020). COVID-19 Position Statement.

These traumatic global events have had a huge impact on communities. They are inextricable from the shift towards sustainability because these events demonstrated how life for many people was unsustainable while maintaining the social status quo. As people around the world demanded action on a range of social issues, RMIT researchers who focus on gender equality responded to these crises by shifting their research practices. The pandemic exposed and highlighted many inequalities that were impossible to ignore.

In this report we highlight how gender equality researchers at RMIT have responded to these global calls for action, and how their work has pivoted to accommodate the global and local challenges wrought by 2020.

## METHODS

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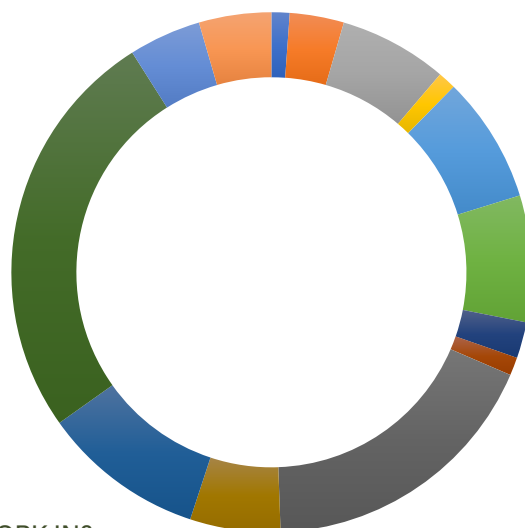
This report is structured around responses from a Google Form survey conducted at the end of 2020 on behalf of the SDG #5 Working Group. Potential respondents were selected by conducting a broad search of the University's researcher database for people who worked on "gender". This search produced a list of 264 researchers who were emailed with a link to the survey. The response rate was 34% with a total of 90 respondents completing the survey.

The survey asked respondents how their gender-focused research had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and what changes they had made to their research practices to accommodate these impacts. The survey also asked researchers about their current work and future plans regarding research on gender in the context of COVID-19.



# RESULTS

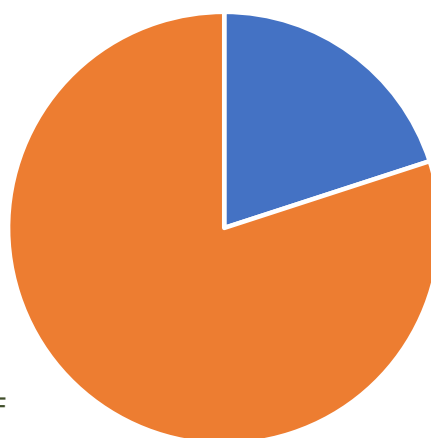
Respondents were represented from across the University across nearly all schools. Three respondents were not associated with a specific school but were located in the Office of Indigenous Education and Engagement, Research and Innovation, and the Office of Policy, Strategy and Impact in the Vice Chancellor's Office. The spread of respondents across the University demonstrates the breadth of expertise in gender research at RMIT.



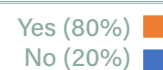
WHAT SCHOOL DO YOU WORK IN?



Most survey respondents (80%) considered themselves gender researchers, meaning they had specific expertise in gender research. The remaining respondents (20%) indicated that they did not consider themselves a gender researcher. However, that they participated in the survey indicates their commitment to gender research.



DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A GENDER RESEARCHER?

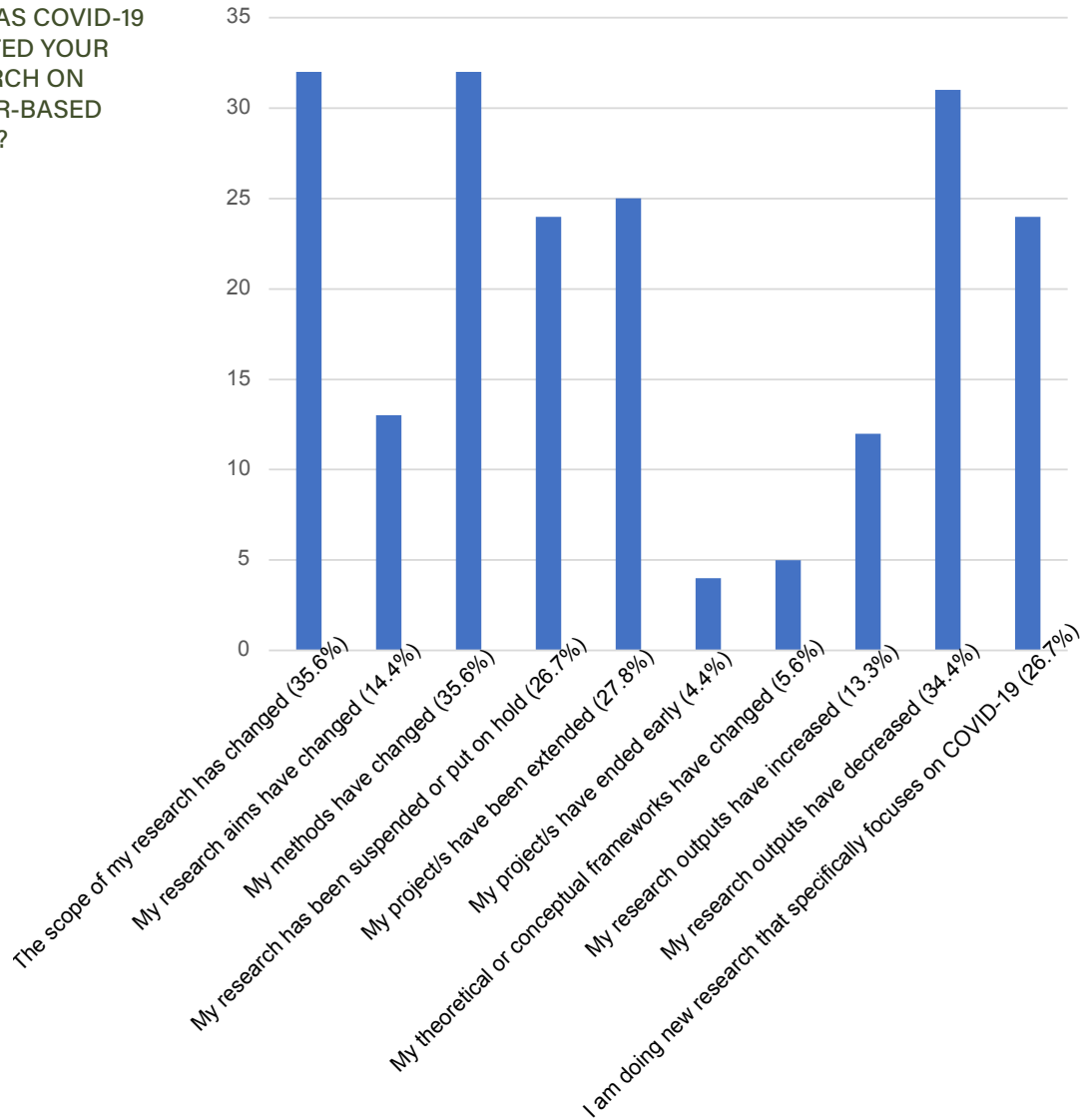


## RESEARCH IMPACTS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had significant impacts on research. The survey asked respondents how COVID-19 has affected their research on gender-based issues. The options available to select were:

- The scope of my research has changed
- My research aims have changed
- My methods have changed
- My research has been suspended or put on hold
- My project/s have been extended
- My project/s has ended early
- My theoretical or conceptual frameworks have changed
- My research outputs have increased as a result of COVID-19
- My research outputs have decreased as a result of COVID-19
- I am doing new research that specifically focuses on COVID-19
- Other [respondents were able to input their own responses]

HOW HAS COVID-19 AFFECTED YOUR RESEARCH ON GENDER-BASED ISSUES?



For the purposes of clarity, the responses to this question have been divided into three categories: broad changes to research; positive impacts on research; and negative impacts on research. Some respondents (5.5%) also reported they did not feel the pandemic had affected their research on gender-based issues, or that their research was unchanged as a result of the pandemic.

## BROAD CHANGES TO RESEARCH

- Over one third (35.6%) of respondents changed their research methods and scope of their research as a result of COVID-19.
- Nearly a third (27.8%) had extended the duration of their projects because of COVID-19.
- Over a quarter (26.7%) were doing new research that specifically focuses on COVID-19.
- 12.8% of respondents changed their aims and 5.6% of respondents changed their theoretical or conceptual frameworks as a result of the changes brought about by COVID-19.

Over one third (35.6%) of respondents changed their research methods and scope of their research as a result of COVID-19. \_\_\_\_\_

## POSITIVE IMPACTS ON RESEARCH

- 13.3% of respondents reported that they had increased their research outputs as a result of COVID-19.

## NEGATIVE IMPACTS ON RESEARCH

- Over a third (34.4%) of respondents decreased their research outputs.
- Over a quarter (26.7%) put their research put on hold.
- 4.4% of respondents reported that their projects had ended early or were not able to commence:
  - “[I] haven’t been able to engage”
  - “I have not been able to start my PhD in Australia because of travel restrictions”
  - “I took a LOA to be able to teach and manage homeschooling”
  - “My research funds were frozen at a critical point in my final year of a three year fellowship”

“COVID has impacted everything, including time it takes to get reviews, conference debates and outputs etc. It has changed the context for all we do.”

– One respondent summarises the totalising impact of the pandemic. \_\_\_\_\_

## ADAPTABILITY AND ADJUSTMENT

The contextual shifts in work and home-life practices have meant that many researchers have had to be even more adaptable than usual. This has resulted in many shifting their research methods to online data collection practices or redesigning projects in order for them to comply with local and international travel restrictions.

Around a quarter of respondents described moving their research practices online, particularly collecting data in focus groups and interviews, and meetings with collaborators. These changes have been frustrating for some, but there were two respondents who reported that the online context meant they were able to care for their children and attend meetings, which they had not been able to do before.

## DATA COLLECTION & RESEARCH METHODS

Many respondents described the changes to their data collection and research methods that were a result of the pandemic:

- “I have conducted all my research over the phone rather than face-to-face”
- “Suspending ARC projects that require in-person interviews (where matters of gender/sexuality are considered sensitive enough not to warrant online interviews) and archival research (where archives have been closed to researchers)”
- “Projects have had to be extended and methods changed to reflect the travel bans.”
- “methods adapted from qualitative to quantitative approach to accommodate social distancing etc”
- “i have focused on desk top research (rather than empirical work)”
- “Survey research instead of qualitative interviewing”
- “As a creative practice researcher, I have been writing other outputs (essays, poems) that were unexpected. The projects I’d planned to do, which involved interviews and other engagements with people, were interrupted. **But I sort of filled the gap with other stuff!**”
- “instead of using primary data I am using secondary data”
- “Adopting methodologies that can be used remotely or easily by in-country researchers”
- “Part of my research involved attending and responding to live theatre works. I have not been able to do that this year so have focussed more on written creative texts for this aspect of research”
- “I am using more textual analysis methodologies and fewer ethnographic methods such as participant observation and field visits”
- “More desktop research and focus on write up rather than undertaking data collection... outputs will look good for the next year but as a pipeline effect there will be a covid disruption witnessed in 2022/23”
- “Re-focusing on my research project to LGBTQIA+ teacher identities in Australian Catholic Schools instead of exploring the construction of masculinities in young boys in single-sex Catholic secondary schools. As a result, I have had to completely change my methodology and methods”
- “Most of my research is desk-based, so not much disruption in terms of access to resources or people. But I do deal with very sensitive and disturbing material related to violence against women and it is been extremely unpleasant to have no separation between a physical space to work and my home. Some data collection and analysis had to be suspended as a result”

“I have conducted all my research over the phone rather than face-to-face.”

These methodological adaptations demonstrate how shifting methods from primary to secondary, or empirical to desktop research, has enabled some gender-focused researchers at RMIT to continue their projects.

However, other respondents found they were unable to keep up their research commitments as the pressures and demands of home-schooling, care-giving or teaching placed greater demands on their time and personal resources:

- “My research is inherently collaborative but COVID-19 has seen a number of my colleagues take VR [voluntary redundancy] and the work load in terms of teaching increase, leading to a reduction in my research outputs overall”
- “Shuffle priorities, lower research expectations”
- “Went part time to care for lower primary school children, so shelved all research activity to ensure teaching and supervision were completed”
- “I haven’t had time to do any research activities because of teaching pressures related to moving courses online due to the pandemic.”

“Shuffle priorities, lower research expectations”



- “I have had research that I have had to suspend, but it is not my work on gender that has been affected. I have also had to move work with human participants that was previously done face-to-face move online. However not all work has been possible to move online, so it has had to be deferred”
- **“A lot of collaborative projects have been suspended and I have had to do more solitary work. I have found myself building workarounds into everything I am planning or considering for next year and beyond. I miss books and libraries and have not adapted well to e-books. I have learned to use new digital tools and databases”**
- **“Needing to take more time.** Recognising the struggles exacerbated by society’s inequality of support for my gender during Covid; or rather, Covid’s impact because of my gender has had a negative effect on my research work”
- “I struggled to get any [research] done because I was inundated with teaching (online for the first time) and admin (first year academic advisor role was extremely demanding this year for obvious reasons)”
- “I more or less paused my research for this year as the administrative and teaching demands were high”
- “Teaching and administration during Covid has been all consuming, gender is a research area, but it is not my key focus and I’ve had to just focus on the must-dos, not the want-to-dos at this time. I specifically want to look at the gendered attacks on journalists during Covid but just hasn’t had a moment”
- “I have had to delay major projects, focus on smaller collaborative projects and, throughout 2020, undertake research on weekends”
- “All new projects had to be put on hold”

“I more or less paused my research for this year as the administrative and teaching demands were high.”

“Spending more time at home has allowed me to focus more on my research, rather than being caught up in constant teaching and meetings”

While many respondents reported that they needed to reprioritise, manage expectations and take more time to complete tasks, for some respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic enabled them to focus more on their research:

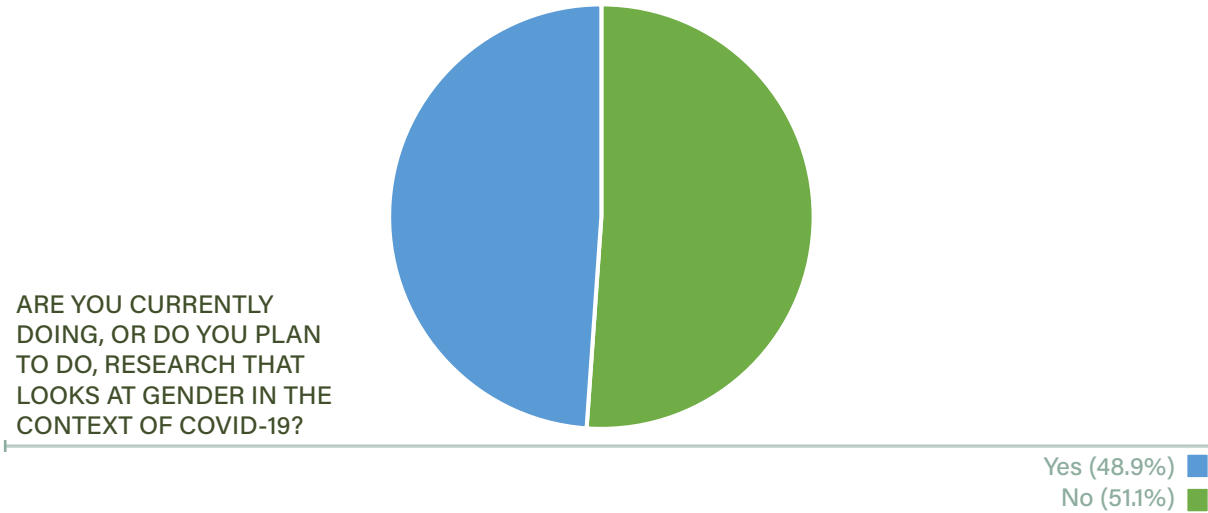
- **“Extended an ongoing project to capture wchanges during Covid. Spending more time at home has allowed me to focus more on my research, rather than being caught up in constant teaching and meetings”**
- **“I mainly have to change the time allocation to my research. COVID in many ways helped me as I was able to connect with my co-researchers online and manage to attend all the research meetings which I was not able to do earlier when we used to have face to face meetings. Given, that I am a part time employee and primary carer to two young children, engaging in online environment helped me to collaborate and network better”**
- “Being in lock down meant I worked 7 days a week and achieved quite a lot. I had a book due, so I had to do it anyway. I do not have children or dependents at home”

These different responses demonstrate the uneven impact of changes and challenges of the pandemic. There has been much research and media discussion documenting how the pandemic impacts and recovery have been gendered, with many women and gender diverse people negatively affected by economic and social upheaval that occurred as a result of lockdowns and cessation of regular business and social activity.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See, for instance, Jenkins, K. (2020). The gendered impact of COVID-19. The Australian Human Rights Commission. <https://humanrights.gov.au/about/news/gendered-impact-covid-19>; Pfitzner, N., Fitz-Gibbon, K., & True, J. (2020). Responding to the ‘shadow pandemic’: Practitioner views on the nature of and responses to violence against women in Victoria, Australia during the COVID-19 restrictions. Monash University. <https://www.monash.edu/arts/gender-and-family-violence/research-projects/covid-19-and-gender-based-violence>; Workplace Gender Equality Agency. (2020). Gendered impact of COVID-19. Workplace Gender Equality Agency. <https://www.wgea.gov.au/topics/gendered-impact-of-covid-19>.

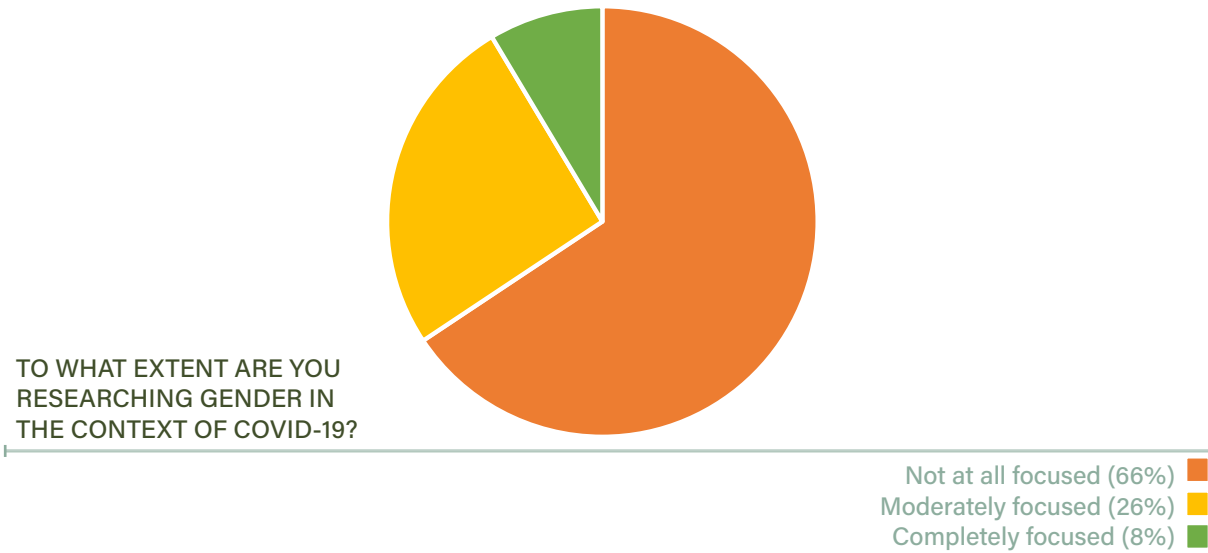
## RESEARCHING GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID-19

Almost half (48.9%) of the researchers surveyed reported they had adapted their projects or designed new ones that investigate the gendered impacts of the pandemic or look at gender in the context of COVID-19.



Researchers were also asked the extent to which their research was focused on gender in the context of COVID-19. The intention of this question was to map the focus and emphasis that researchers were placing on gender-related issues during the pandemic. Respondents were invited to answer the question in relation to up to six projects to capture instances of multiple research projects.

This pie chart below represents 233 projects reported by 74 respondents and the different level of focus the respondents ascribed to each one: 153 projects were “not at all focused” on gender and COVID-19; 60 were “moderately focused”; and 20 were “completely focused”. Therefore, currently at RMIT there are at least 80 projects focused on gender in the context of COVID-19.



The responses to this question shows that the COVID-19 pandemic is influencing the gender-focused research being conducted at RMIT. This further demonstrates how RMIT’s research community is adaptable and reflexive in response to shifts in social, economic and research contexts.

## PROJECTS RESEARCHING GENDER AND COVID-19 AT RMIT

There are at least 80 RMIT-led research projects currently underway or planned that investigate gender in the context of COVID-19. The descriptions of these projects below have been organised by school or work area to demonstrate the breadth of expertise and knowledge currently being deployed to understand, analyse and document the ongoing impacts of the pandemic across Australian and international communities. Some of the descriptions have been highlighted to emphasise the diversity of gender equality research across the University. All the descriptions have been paraphrased for uniformity and to remove some identifying information.

Accounting, Information Systems & Supply Chain	The effects of COVID-19 on the research outputs of women academics.
Art	How has a shifting perception of proximity to family shaped the experience of first-time mothers during Melbourne's lockdown?
Art	<p>Project 1: "NEWSROOM" employs found news items from the press, TV and online to re-present the daily news cycle from alternative perspectives through the act of print-based artworks.</p> <p>Project 2: "Presenting the News Anew" A chapter co-written with ANU and MADA based on past artworks pre-COVID-19.</p> <p>Project 3: "If then Else" (working title) exploring gendered and non-gendered space.</p>
Business and Law	<p>Project 1: How has COVID-19 added to or amplified the gendered stressors for the sandwich generation?</p> <p>Project 2: How do middle-aged women achieve their health and wellbeing goals, and what are the impediments to achieving these goals? E.g. the role of procrastination.</p>
Business and Law	The gendered impacts of working from home on staff.
Business and Law	"Domestic Economic Abuse: The Violence of Money". This project takes account of COVID-19 but is not specifically focused on it.
Business and Law	<p>Project 1: "APEC Online Training Program on Gender Data". This project aims to build knowledge and instil best practice across APEC economies on the collection, analysis and reporting of data relating to women's economic empowerment.</p> <p>Project 2: "APEC Women's Access to Global Markets". This project aims to build the capacity of the APEC business community to better support women entrepreneurs and business owners to build export-ready businesses and access global markets.</p>
Design	<p>Project 1: Motorsports' response to the pandemic through eSports and livestreaming, specific engagement with women's professional sports organisation as one of the very few organisations that maintained presence for women's pro sports during lockdown.</p> <p>Project 2: "eSports Associationalism". This project engages with the marginalisation of women within policy making positions in the new media industry from grassroots to pro.</p> <p>Project 3: "Minor eSports regions". This Australian-focused project engages with issues of gender equality across Australian eSports.</p>
Economics, Finance and Marketing	Examining decision making related to anti-consumption practices amongst mothers, with one focus being the COVID-19 vaccine.

Economics, Finance and Marketing	Analysis of the impact of pandemic-induced recession on women's employment in Australia, specifically in Victoria. This entails analysis of labour force data and drawing upon research and evidence to propose policy recommendations for Federal, State and Local Governments, including to inform the next Victorian State Budget. These projects include commissioned advisory work for Victorian Government Equal Workplaces Advisory Council and Local Governments.
Economics, Finance and Marketing	Research with Australian Cinematographers that looks at careers of camera department staff. There is a gender focus to establish evidence on difference in career outcomes based on gender (and other demographic factors) and to explore barriers that explain why women don't advance in their careers.
Economics, Finance and Marketing	The impact of the COVID-19 supplement on single mothers housing precarity and household wellbeing.
Education	<p>Project 1: A suite of zine making workshops for feminist academics internationally. This creative participatory project aimed to create feminist pause during the pandemic.</p> <p>Project 2: Designed and disseminated a large-scale survey that investigated the impact of COVID-19 upon everyday sexism in higher education, we are currently in the process of collecting further data through online interview.</p> <p>Project 3: ARC Discovery team led by ECU and working with WSU. The project, "Understanding and Challenging Everyday Sexisms in Australian Universities" will also investigate the gendered impacts of COVID-19 over the next 3 years.</p>
Education	Added a section to my work about COVID-19 and its impact on the lives of transgender people as gender minorities in Pakistan.
Education	<p>Project 1: The SDG PhD research group associated with the School of Education has submitted an application for a book looking at 21st century teaching and learning in the context of a post-COVID scenario for Pakistan.</p> <p>Project 2: The same group has applied for a UNESCO consultancy investigating the gendered effects and impacts on education for girls.</p>
Education	A project is proposed from IE&E around the effect on Indigenous female students and staff during the COVID-19 pandemic but it has not been confirmed.
Global, Urban and Social Studies	Women's Research Network statement about the inequitable impacts on women's research careers and monitoring the long-term outcome of these impacts.
Global, Urban and Social Studies	Analysis of COVID-19's impact on children's education and (human) security, partially as a gendered issue.
Global, Urban and Social Studies	Fieldwork into the prevention of violence practices of young people has been conducted throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Some participants have specifically discussed how their digital practices have changed in sharing and becoming aware of gender inequality.
Global, Urban and Social Studies	<p>Project 1: Livelihood and capacity development with conflict vulnerable communities in Mindanao, Philippines.</p> <p>Project 2: Community-based agriculture and natural resource extension in Fiji, the Philippines and Australia</p>

Global, Urban and Social Studies	Project 1: Livelihood and capacity development with conflict vulnerable communities in Mindanao, Philippines. Project 2: Community-based agriculture and natural resource extension in Fiji, the Philippines and Australia.
Global, Urban and Social Studies	Project is based on gender diverse youth and mental health support services. Refocus has involved a new case study of online service delivery in light of COVID-19 related lockdown.
Health and Biomedical Sciences	Effect of COVID-19 infection differentially on the immune system of males, females and other sexes, as well as demographic data on gender in same human clinical trials.
Management	Experiences of women in couple households with young children, who worked part-time/casually during COVID. This project is investigating gendered experiences impacts on work and household work and care arrangements.
Management	Project 1: "Women, Work, Care & COVID-19" Project 2: "Gendered Impact of COVID-related Changes to Work Arrangements in Australian and Canadian Universities." Lead by Griffith Uni.
Management	Project 1: Small partially RMIT-funded project on "Women, Work, Care and COVID-19": This project investigates employment changes and household work and family arrangements in dual earner heterosexual couple households with young children. Project 2: Analysis of social care policy and impacts on feminised care workforce—extending policy and market analysis to include COVID-19 responses and implications.
Media and Communication	Plan to collaborate in the writing of two books that look at the responses to COVID-19 from different perspectives. Because the majority of teaching in higher education is conducted by women there will necessarily be a dimension of gender, especially in relation to juggling home schooling/home duties and teaching online.
Media and Communication	Project 1: Gender representation, disinformation and COVID-19. Project 2: COVID-19, relationships, mobility and identity
Media and Communication	Work, care and creativity. This is a rapid study that seeks creative responses from participants whose life is shaped by various care roles (children, older parents, disabled family and friends). This project seeks to provide vignettes to illustrate the complex ways in which work, care and creativity during the pandemic have been experienced.
Media and Communication	Research on the aged care sector through and beyond COVID-19, with particular focus on care workers.
Media and Communication	Research into digital hostility has drawn on, and contributed to, the expanding corpus of scholarship on the gendered (read: sexist, misogynist) nature of this hostility, particularly as it manifests in practices such as trolling.
Media and Communication	Interviewing women who are contesting an election during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Media and Communication	<p>Project 1: Digital stock market practices and men. This project emerged from work questioning digital “risk” because of COVID-19, increased attention to managing finances because of market issues due to COVID-19, and changes in digital gambling, sports betting, etc. that may be associated with men doing more digital stocktrading (with a short term aim for profit rather than longer term investment or self-managed super funds). This project looks at how masculinity shapes these practices especially learning from other men about gambling/ investing in social spaces with other men e.g. WhatsApp groups with a betting syndicate, talking about stocks with men when out. This project is with WSU.</p> <p>Project 2: Creative writing workshops with HDR students at RMIT exploring their experiences of COVID-19. This was not intentionally about gender, but gender has been important in analysis and writing up reflections of the method. Most of the research with HDR students (interviews [early project] and workshops) have involved people who are not cisgender men, especially when the methods are about supporting other students or doing a workshop together. This project is exploring if people who are women or gender diverse are more likely to participate in research with methods that allow them to reflect on their experiences as a collective (rather than online survey methods etc. like a survey conducted about arts workers and COVID-19, where more men participated than other genders until the invitation was circulated to participate in dance networks that are less likely to involve cisgender men, particularly straight cisgender men).</p>
Media and Communication	<p>Research focused on the articulation of feminism and journalistic production of counter-hegemonic discourses in the context of the Latin American feminist digital media platform. Includes analysis of media investigations on how COVID-19 governments restrictions affect women's rights on abortion. Also, how this media gives visibility to the problem of gender violence in the pandemic context.</p>
Media and Communication	<p>The extension of an ongoing project looked at the recalibration of mobile phone use in domestic space during "stay at home" restrictions in Australia. There was a "gender" component in that changes experienced by both men and women were addressed. However, within the scope of this project no remarkable differences were observed between genders. Adjacent work, however, did show that there were significant changes to many women's everyday domestic experiences (e.g. increase in domestic violence etc).</p>
Media and Communication	<p>Research planned on the impact of COVID-19 on screen cultures.</p>
Media and Communication	<p>Research into how women and GNC people are being impacted by music shutdowns.</p>
Media and Communication	<p>Healthy masculinities in student cohorts.</p>
Property, Construction and Project Management	<p>Project 1: Resilience and career resilience of project management practitioners (currently analysing results).</p> <p>Project 2: Resilience and mental health of academics (applying for extension to ethics).</p> <p>Project 3: Graduate transition in 2020 (currently in progress)</p>
Science	<p>Project 1: Women, DRR and food and water security in Honiara.</p>

Property, Construction and Project Management	<p>Project 1: Working as a member of a Construction Industry Culture Taskforce looking at women's health in construction and the way the economic stimulus package needs to address gender inequality and be used to incentivise companies to recruit females and provide jobs and work environments that are supportive of women's participation (funded).</p> <p>Project 2: Investigating the way that working from home during the COVID pandemic impacted the productivity and mental health of men and women differently due to family/caring commitments in project-based construction work (unfunded).</p> <p>Project 3: Investigating the social support provided to construction apprentices (both male and female) but over-sampling women so as to understand specifically their experiences of workplace bullying, incivility or discrimination.</p>
Science	<p>Research with UN Habitat mapping COVID-19 vulnerability in the Pacific. This work has looked for sex-disaggregated statistics as they are important, but they are unfortunately not available in many countries.</p>

Research work from the social sciences is somewhat over-represented in the above table, but it is encouraging to see how gender inequality research during COVID-19 is continuing to be embedded within disciplines outside social sciences and humanities. This shows the University's commitment to sustainability by seeing gender inequality as an issue that affects nearly every aspect of research across all disciplines.

The table highlights how RMIT's research community is working to address some of the gendered nature of the impacts of COVID-19. Some of this work is focused on how women and gender non-conforming or non-binary people are experiencing more violence due to the pandemic or more demands for them to provide domestic labour and childcare duties. Men and masculinities research is also a focus, particularly around the role of hegemonic masculinity in creating and perpetuating harmful stereotypes that can stymie gender equality advances.

While there are many projects that are specifically focused on gender and COVID-19, there are also many currently being undertaken in which COVID-19 provides context or background for important research and communications work:

- "I haven't been focusing specifically on this topic, although during 2020 I **wrote several poems** that were commissions (Melbourne Poet Laureates series, Borderless Feminist Anthology, Overland) that ended up being feminist poems related to the 'now,' so COVID-related. That wasn't really planned, though"
- "I was employed (outside of RMIT) to do a research project on the effects of COVID-19 on primary prevention of violence against women, but that project is over now"
- "My PhD thesis examines family violence against women with insecure migration status in Victoria. As I collected my data in 2018/2019 I was not able to consider the impact of the pandemic on women's experiences, however, I have kept up to date with changes in policy, more recent research that has begun to examine this, and have kept across what is happening in the sector. This will enable me to contextualise my own findings and discuss some of the ways that existing issues have been exacerbated"

Throughout the survey, researchers have highlighted the importance of non-traditional research outputs such as media, art and poetry as a means of communicating about gender equality research. These outputs can help ensure the important work of gender equality done at RMIT is carried into the community.

# CONCLUSION

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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected nearly every aspect of life on a global scale. At RMIT, with its diverse international cohort of experts, it is unsurprising that many researchers found themselves needing to completely delay or redesign projects. It is a testament to the resilience and expertise that so many projects continued despite the challenging circumstances.

These lists are non-exhaustive summaries of some of the projects focussing on gender that are currently underway or about to begin. In line with RMIT's commitment to the SDGs, it is expected that many more projects will be added to this list in the coming years.

If you would like any more information about RMIT's Sustainable Development Goal work, please visit: <https://www.rmit.edu.au/about/our-values/sustainable-development-goals>