

MONEY INVESTING WOMEN AT WORK

## Worry and lack of confidence top barriers for women investing

By **Emily Chantiri**

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When it comes to finances, women still have a long way to go.

New research from Fidelity has found a number of large barriers still exist for women to become regular investors, with financial inequality and worry among them.



New research found many women don't know if they are on track to achieve their financial goals.

The report reveals that while women invest less than men, they are more worried about their financial future, with 42.2 per cent expressing concern on a daily or weekly basis.

Alva Devoy, managing director at Fidelity International Australia, says women are worried that they feel less likely, or don't know, if they are on track to achieve their financial goals.

"We need to demystify the view among women that investing is complicated and you need a lot of money," she says.

"If we can get past that hurdle, it will be beneficial to women's long-term financial wellbeing.

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***"Women are more risk averse, prefer the perceived safety of cash and feel that the investment industry is not tailored to them"***

"We know women take time out of the workforce and, equally important, they live longer. These factors alone mean women have to make their money work harder."

Not enough women are investing in the stock market, says Ms Devoy.

"They are more risk averse, prefer the perceived safety of cash and feel that the investment industry is not tailored to them."

The report also found that one of the main barriers preventing women from investing was lack of confidence and time.

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"There isn't a huge disparity between men and women when it comes to financial knowledge, but there is when it comes to having the confidence to use that knowledge," Ms Devoy says.

Just 28.3 per cent of women describe themselves as "very" or "somewhat" confident when it comes to investing, compared to 50.8 per cent of men.

Just five per cent of women are "certain" about how much they going to need for retirement, compared 12.4 per cent for men. More than a third of the women surveyed do not know how much they need to retire.

Another example of gender differences were if women come into a windfall. More than 26 per cent said they would pay down debt.

"Men are more likely to invest it," says Ms Devoy. "For women, saving is a focus, or paying off a mortgage."

Half of the women surveyed reported not having any spare money as the reason they did not invest, compared to 35.2 per cent for men.

More than 50 per cent preferred to put their money into a typical savings account. They described investment communications as complicated and a quarter stated it was "intimidating and tailored to men. "

"As an industry, we have a clear call to action," Ms Devoy says.

"We need to find ways to better engage with women and help them to understand investing can achieve their financial goals."

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