Perth trails the nation in child care, with the fewest places per capita of any Australian capital.

It also has the equal fewest places for before and after-school care, and Perth women are less likely to have access to spouse and family support because of the State's high number of migrants and fly-in, fly-out workers.

Compounding the problem, according to a Committee for Perth-commissioned two-year study to be released today, are long waiting lists, inflexible hours and locations, with just two childcare centres in the CBD.

Committee chief executive Marion Fulker said Perth faced a "perfect storm" of factors that made it hard for women, particularly those with children, to stay in the workforce and climb the corporate ladder.

As well as the lack of child care and family support, flexible work was either not available or came with negative consequences.

"While the researchers uncovered a number of companies offering flexible work arrangements, it was reported as a career killer for both women and men," Ms Fulker said.

The study by University of Queensland academics Terrance Fitzsimmons and Professor Victor Callan was bankrolled largely by Shell Australia with the WA Government, EY, WorleyParsons and Westpac.

University of WA research for the study found Perth had 0.07 childcare places per capita based on women workers in all occupations, compared with 0.1 in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide.
and 0.13 in Brisbane.

For out of school and vacation places, the figure was 0.04 for Perth, the same as Sydney and less than Melbourne (0.05), Brisbane (0.06) and Adelaide (0.06).

The study, based on interviews with 173 women and men, found on average women in Perth had partners who were absent from home overnight more than in other States. Immigration patterns meant fewer women could rely on extended family.

Among 31 recommendations, the study said the WA Government should “investigate and remedy” the relative lack of childcare places, high costs and limited hours.

Women’s Interest Minister Liza Harvey said the Government was examining the report in detail.

“Government and private sectors acknowledge more needs to be done to encourage women to participate in the workforce,” she said.
Perth worst capital to get child care - The West Australian

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