



THE SENATE
SENATE FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
REFERENCES COMMITTEE

Gender segregation in the workplace
Public Hearing – Wednesday 26 April 2017
Questions Taken on Notice – Office for Women

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CHAIR: So you monitor the WGEA data and you notice whether it goes up or down, but you do not have a benchmark against which to assess that? It is bad if it goes up, I guess.

Ms McIntyre: We do not have a specific target, and, as I think other witnesses have alluded to, the trajectory to close it at the moment is a very long period of time.

CHAIR: No intermediate targets?

Ms McIntyre: No. We can take that on notice, but none at this stage.

ANSWER

There is currently no specific national target for reducing the gender pay gap in Australia. However, there are a number of targets the Australian Government has set in relation to issues of workforce participation, leadership, and gender equality, that contribute to closing the gender pay gap.

- Australia has committed to a goal to reduce the gender gap in workforce participation by 25 per cent by 2025. This was agreed to under Australia's G20 Presidency in 2014.
 - For Australia, this means lifting the women's participation rate by at least 3 percentage points.
 - Australia is progressing well. Just under half the goal had been met in December 2016 (notwithstanding future fluctuations in labour force participation).
- In 2016, the Australian Government committed to a new gender diversity target of women holding 50 per cent of Government Board positions overall, and women and men each holding at least 40 per cent of positions at the individual board level.
 - This replaced the previous target of women holding 40 per cent of Government Board positions, which was met in 2016. As at 30 June 2016 40.5 per cent of Australian Government Board positions were held by women.
 - As at 31 December 2016, women held 41.1 per cent of Government board positions.
- The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) collects data and reports on gender equality, including equal remuneration, among relevant employers (ie non-public sector employers with 100 or more staff). Relevant employers are required to report annually against a set of standardised gender equality indicators (GEIs), which include: GEI 3 - equal remuneration between women and men.
 - Reporting organisations report on whether they've conducted a gender pay gap analysis, and what actions have been taken to address gaps.

- The Agency also provides reporting organisations with customised, confidential benchmark reports. Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports enable employers track their progress in reducing any gaps and track how they compare with other employers.
- WGEA's Employer of Choice for Gender Equality citation requires employers to conduct a gender pay gap analysis and take actions to reduce any gaps.

Additionally, the Australian Government, in its capacity as an employer is committed to achieving gender equality across the APS workforce. *Balancing the Future: The Australian Public Service Gender Equality Strategy 2016-2019* underpins the Governments approach to achieving gender equality in the public service. As part of the Strategy agencies are required to:

- set tailored, but ambitious, gender equality stretch targets across all leadership levels and business areas. Agency heads are to be accountable through their performance agreements for meeting these targets over the life of the Strategy, towards an overarching goal of achieving 50-50 gender balance.
- develop and publish individual action plans to reach their gender equality targets. These strategies are to be updated as needed, based on monitoring and evaluation of progress.
- Identify where targets are not being met, and leaders, managers and supervisors to engage in honest conversations with their staff about progress towards gender equality and workplace flexibility.