

Chapter 1

Introduction

Referral

1.1 On 9 November 2016, the Senate referred the following matter to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee (the committee) for inquiry and report by 30 March 2017:

Gender segregation in the workplace and its impact on women's economic equality, with particular reference to:

- (a) the nature and extent of industrial and occupational gender segregation in Australian workplaces relative to comparable jurisdictions, including gender segregation in tertiary education courses;
- (b) factors driving industrial and occupational gender segregation in the Australian context;
- (c) economic consequences of gender segregation for women, including the contribution of industrial and occupational gender segregation to the gender pay gap;
- (d) approaches to addressing gender segregation as it relates to economic inequality and the gender pay gap in comparable jurisdictions; and
- (e) remedies appropriate for Australia, including but not limited to:
 - (i) measures to encourage women's participation in male-dominated occupations and industries;
 - (ii) measures to professionalise and improve conditions in female-dominated occupations and industries; and
 - (iii) measures to promote pay equity.¹

1.2 On 13 February 2017, the Senate granted an extension of time for reporting until 11 May 2017.² The Senate granted a second extension until 7 June 2017.³

Conduct of the inquiry

1.3 Details of the inquiry were placed on the committee's website at: http://www.aph.gov.au/senate_fpa. The committee also contacted a number of relevant individuals and organisations to notify them of the inquiry and invite submissions by 10 February 2017. The committee extended this time until 3 March 2017.

1 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 14, 9 November 2016, pp 436–437.

2 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 27, 13 February 2017, p. 913.

3 *Journals of the Senate*, No. 39, 9 May 2017, p. 1304.

1.4 The committee received 42 submissions. Submissions received by the committee are listed at Appendix 1.

1.5 The committee held two public hearings:

- 10 April 2017 in Melbourne; and
- 26 April 2017 in Sydney.

1.6 A list of witnesses who gave evidence is available at Appendix 2.

1.7 Submissions and the Hansard transcript of evidence may be accessed through the committee website.

Scope of the inquiry

1.8 The inquiry's terms of reference sought to measure and define the dimensions and consequences of gender segregation in Australian workplaces and its relationship to pay equity. As expected, the inquiry found this issue to be complex and multi-layered. Accordingly, some of the issues raised in this inquiry have overlapped with previous inquiries and reports.

1.9 These include the 2009 House of Representatives report Making it Fair, reviews by the Australian Human Rights Commission, Senate legislation and references committee inquiries and the work of the Productivity Commission.

1.10 Where there is significant overlap between the subject matter of an existing, relatively recent report, and evidence to this inquiry, the report will not conduct detailed examination of that issue and instead will refer readers to the relevant existing material.

Acknowledgement

1.11 The committee thanks the many organisations and individuals who participated in the public hearings as well as those that made written submissions.