

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Agency - Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004169

Senator Marshall asked on 30 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 74

Question

WGEA - Number of years to close the gender pay gap

Senator MARSHALL: On current trends, and based on the data collected by your agency, how many years will it take to close the gender pay gap in Australia?

Ms Lyons: The short answer is that I do not know. I would have to take that on notice and go back and look at the data we have collected over the last three years.

Answer

The Agency is in its third year of collecting data relating to the gender pay gap. Long term extrapolation based on such a short time series is fraught with issues around methodology. Any estimate of the time taken to close the gender pay gap would need to be covered by a number of caveats due to the method used for the estimation process as well as the limited scope of the Agency's data (i.e. excludes public sector employers and employers with less than 100 employees). However, based on the current data, it is highly likely that a gender pay gap in favour of men will remain a persistent feature of the Australian economy for years to come.

Recent analysis¹ has estimated the number of years for the gender pay gap to close across a range of countries, including Australia. The analysis estimates that Australia is 50 years away from closing the pay gap, with some countries being as far as 300 years away.

¹ White & Case 2017 *Closing the gender pay gap*
<https://www.whitecase.com/sites/whitecase/files/files/download/publications/closing-gender-pay-gap.pdf>