

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Budget Estimates 2017 - 2018

Outcome 2 - Workplace Relations and Economic Strategy

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ17-004172

Senator Moore asked on 30 May 2017 on proof Hansard page 75

Question

Gender participation rates

Senator MOORE: Could we have on notice so that we can see it graphically—I do not know whether it is you, Ms Lyons, or the whole department—the men's and women's participation when we made the commitment and the men's and women's participation rates in January 2017, when we believe we had gone to two-thirds of the goal. Could we just see exactly what that comparator was?

Ms Parker: Sure.

Ms Lyons: My understanding is that in 2014, when the agreement was made, it was based on OECD figures.

Senator MOORE: OECD figures for Australia?

Ms Lyons: For Australia. I can give you those.

Senator MOORE: That would be great.

Ms Lyons: The OECD estimated in 2014 that Australia's male participation rate was at 82.2 per cent and the female participation rate was at 70.5 per cent—and the working age population was between the ages of 15 and 64. That left a gap in participation between women and men of 11.5 percentage points. A 25 per cent decrease in the gap of 11.5 per cent is an increase of approximately three percentage points.

Senator MOORE: And then the figures in January 2017?

Ms Lyons: I have the ABS workforce participation rates. We actually do not collect participation rates. We collect—

Senator MOORE: So what we are juggling with here is 'yoghurt'. It is one of the consistent issues in this space—that figures get thrown around. We know there is a problem; there is no doubt that there is a problem. If we are going to be making a claim—and I think we have made progress—it has got to be OECD figures with OECD figures, which is like with like, or the bureau of stats figures and bureau of stats figures with the necessary three or four little provisos that go with it down below. This is for the people who continue to challenge whether there is a need for this work and, for a different group of people, whether it is making any difference to the work that people are putting in. Can I put that on notice?

Ms Lyons: May I suggest that we work together on that one

Answer

Please refer to response EMSQ17-004171.