

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2014-2015

Agency – Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Department of Employment Question No. EM1606_15

Senator McKenzie asked on 23 October 2014 on proof Hansard page 109

Question

WGEA – Gender bias

CHAIR: It is just the only way you can be sure that gender bias is not impacting the pay outcomes? Do you accept that for smaller business with say, 150 employees a payroll analysis may be difficult?

Ms Conway: I do not believe so, if they use our tool. That is why we have spent the time and have worked with Mercer to make that tool as user-friendly as possible.

CHAIR: How many small businesses of 150 employees or fewer have you consulted with in the construction of that tool?

Ms Conway: We certainly have consulted about the pay equity campaign and the tools. We have talked to a range of people, but I could not tell you the size of those organisations.

CHAIR: Could you take it on notice. If you are sure it will be applicable to small businesses – because sometimes one-size policy does not work – could you take on notice that you have consulted on how that tool will work for their size of business.

Answer

Small business is a key stakeholder group that was considered in the development of educational resources as part of the pay equity project. We have addressed the needs of this stakeholder group in several ways:

1. Within the main pay equity toolkit (page 19), the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) outlines a simplified methodology for organisations with between 1-99 employees to conduct a payroll analysis. This method is called a 'line-by-line' review.
2. The gender pay gap calculator has been designed so that smaller organisations can use their workplace profile data reported to the WGEA. This reduces the requirement to collect any additional data.
3. The WGEA has also drafted a simplified pay equity toolkit specifically tailored for small business. This contains a simplified step-by-step methodology specifically for the small business stakeholder group. This toolkit also contains worked examples of small business payroll analyses. This toolkit will be made available as a draft for consultation in December 2014. The WGEA will work in partnership with Economic Security4Women (ES4W) to conduct the consultations with small businesses. Feedback from the consultations will be incorporated into the final version, planned for release around International Women's Day in 2015.

4. During 2014, the WGEA consulted with key small business associations and relevant small business stakeholders (list below), many of whom expressed interest in communicating the release of the small business pay equity tool-kit to their members once it is available.

Stakeholders consulted:

- Economic Security 4 Women
- Office for Women
- Fair Work Ombudsman
- Department of Treasury
- Office of the Small Business Commissioner
- Australian Human Rights Commission
- Employsure, HR consultant
- UN Global Compact
- Australian Human Resources Institute
- Department of Employment
- Fair Work Commission
- Telstra Business Awards
- Australian Institute of Management
- Certified Practising Accountants Australia
- Institute of Architects
- NSW Small Business Commission
- Australian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.