

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Agency - Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ16-001004

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

WGEA - Superannuation

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency's media release dated 4 December 2015, states

“A gender pay gap in average annual earnings for full-time permanent employee's results in an annual 19.3% shortfall in superannuation contributions for women compared to men”.

Please inform the Committee what you are doing to address the disparity in the superannuation gender gap?

Further, what actions is the Agency taking to overcome the gender inequalities in paid and unpaid work that contribute to the superannuation gap?

Is there anything the Government is doing to accelerate the closing of the gender pay gap?

Answer

The gender superannuation gap is a consequence of the economy-wide gender pay gap in favour of men coupled with the greater time women spend out of the paid workforce.

The Agency contributes to improving public understanding of the causes and consequences of the gender pay gap and superannuation gender gap through developing and publishing research, raising awareness at speaking engagements and by promoting best practice around pay equity and flexible work through our Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation and Pay Equity Ambassador Program.

Examples of this work include:

Research: Three in-depth papers and submissions have been created, posted on the Agency's website and disseminated to the general public, employers and academics through Agency network channels. These are:

- Insights Paper on women's economic security in retirement
- Insights Paper on unpaid care work and labour market outcomes
- Submission to the Senate Inquiry into the Economic Security of Women in Retirement (2015).

Speaking engagements: Agency representatives raise awareness of the role gender inequality plays in driving the superannuation gap in public speaking engagements; educational seminars and conference panels. Agency staff spoke at 62 events during the 2015–2016 financial year.

Toolkits for conducting a pay gap analysis and developing a pay equity strategy are available on the Agency's website. The Agency's pay equity resources were downloaded 3,405 times in 2015–16.

The Agency also has the Pay Equity Ambassador Program. Over 100 CEOs, chairpersons and directors have signed up to participate in this program. To join, Ambassadors must have conducted a gender pay gap analysis in the last two years, taken action on the results and committed to continuing to address pay inequity in their business. Ambassadors also work with the Agency to host education events, develop education resources – such as video case studies – and publicly speak out on measures to address pay gaps. Our dataset shows that the proportion of employers conducting a gender pay gap analysis grew from 24.0% in 2013–14 to 26.3% in 2014–15.

The Agency actively promotes flexible work practices, to remove barriers to workforce participation for people with caring responsibilities. A range of toolkits have been developed to support organisations develop and implement a flexibility strategy. The Agency has also delivered 10 flexibility events to date during 2016. Our dataset shows that the proportion of employers with flexibility policies and/or strategies grew from 57.5% in 2013–14 to 60.2% in 2014–15.