

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. EMSQ16-001005

Senator Marshall provided in writing.

Question

WGEA - Domestic and Family Violence Leave

I refer to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's media release dated 13 November 2015, which states:

"One-third of major private sector employers have a policy or strategy in place to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence".

- What is the Government doing to address this issue to ensure domestic and family violence leave is right within all workplaces?
- Are you aware of Labor's policy to provide for 5 days domestic and family violence leave as part of the National Employment Standards?
- You'd welcome that policy wouldn't you?
- Is this something you'd advise the Government to adopt?

Answer

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Agency) is unable to provide advice on government policies.

We can advise that from the Agency's 2014-15 dataset 34.9% of employers had a formal policy or strategy to support employees who are experiencing family or domestic violence.

In addition, employers without a formal policy or strategy offered a range of measures to assist employees experiencing family or domestic violence. 76.1% of employers have some measure/s in place, these included Employee Assistance Programs (64.7%), access to paid or unpaid leave (52.4%), referral to support services (26.0%) and training of human resources staff (13.5%).

To better understand how employers are responding to this issue, the Agency expanded the sections in our 2015-16 questionnaire relating to measures to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence, resulting in collection of more detailed data.

Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, the Agency's focus is to work with relevant employers to improve gender equality outcomes.