

Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012

Consultation on reporting matters

Overview

On 6 December 2012 the Workplace Gender Equality Act (WGE Act) received Royal Assent. This heralds in the first, and very important, implementation phase of the new Act.

The WGE Act requires that reporting matters, under the Gender Equality Indicators, be set by disallowable instrument prior to the start of the 2013 reporting cycle. These will form the basis for reporting from 2014 onwards.

The aim of collecting this information is to assess gender equality in the workplace. Businesses should be able to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. Reporting will enable employers to consider their practices and outcomes from year to year, and in comparison with their industry peers.

The reporting matters will be developed in close consultation with key stakeholders including industry, business, employee organisations, higher education institutions, and other stakeholders with a special knowledge or interest in gender equality in the workplace.

The reporting matters should be useful for identifying and measuring progress, and encourage improvements in gender equality in the workplace.

The Act provides an opportunity for all stakeholder groups to identify the issues affecting gender equality in the workplace. The views of the business and broader community are important, and your participation in the development of the reporting matters is welcomed and encouraged.

The new framework

The WGE Act introduces five Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs):

- The gender composition of the workforce
- Gender composition of governing bodies
- Equal remuneration between women and men
- Availability and utility of employment terms, conditions and practices relating to flexible working arrangements for employees, and to working arrangements supporting employees with family or caring responsibilities
- Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace.

Private sector employers of 100 or more employees will need to provide information against these. This replaces previous reporting on workplace programs.

This will make reporting simpler and more streamlined. Importantly, it will establish a long term data set to provide evidence-based insight at the workplace and industry level.

The [table accompanying this issues brief](#) provides an outline of some key areas for consideration in the development of reporting matters. Terms and concepts used in this table are discussed below.

Key outcomes

The GEIs will measure and help drive progress towards five key outcomes:

- To improve women’s workforce participation across Australia
- To improve women’s representation in leaderships positions in workplaces and on governing bodies
- To improve equal remuneration for work of equal value, between women and men
- To increase flexible working for both women and men, particularly those with family or caring responsibilities
- To promote employee and employer engagement on gender equality.

Possible Considerations

1. Do these outcomes sufficiently reflect the intent of the Act?
2. Do they need amending or expanding?

Measurable outcomes and process indicators

The information gathered by employer reports needs to be meaningfully aimed at providing employers with the information they need to work towards the key objectives outlined above.

There are two key types of information that can help in this way:

- Measurable outcomes: Data and statistics, enabling a view of the ‘state of play’ – for example, the number of women and men at the executive level, or the proportion of employees returning from parental leave. It may reveal areas for improvement in gender equality.
- Process indicators: Information on the existence of certain conditions, practices or policies – for example, the availability of flex-time for employees. This will enable employers compare their practices with those of other employers, particularly those who are making good progress towards gender equality.

Possible Considerations

Priority reporting matters

3. What are the priority measurable outcomes in terms of each key objective (for example, improving equal remuneration)?
4. What are the priority process indicators in terms of each key objective (for example, increasing flexible working arrangements)?

Usefulness

5. Do employers currently collect this information? What existing information is most useful? What information have employers previously collected but rejected for lack of insight?
6. Which outcomes or process indicators are likely to be most useful for employers?

Minimum standards

The WGE Act requires that minimum standards be set prior to the commencement of the 2014–15 reporting cycle. These will be the subject of further consultation with stakeholders and the public over the course of 2013. Minimum standards are intended to be a small but meaningful set, tied to a select few reporting matters, with the primary aim of enabling the Agency to best target its education resources.

Other Possible Considerations

Impact on business

7. Which outcomes or process indicators will be most difficult and/or costly for employers to report on? Why?
8. Are there alternative ways this information could be obtained?

Timing

9. Would it be beneficial or reasonable to phase certain outcome measures or process indicators in over time?
10. If so, which ones, and on what basis?

Assistance

11. What assistance will employers need to report on particular outcomes measures or process indicators?

Industries

12. Are there any outcomes or process indicators that should or should not be included for particular industries? Why?

Next steps

The Australian Government is seeking views on these by **29 January 2013**. Please email responses to: women@fahcsia.gov.au. Your comments will not be made public, unless you grant permission to do so.

Targeted consultations will also be held early in 2013 with stakeholder groups, including peak industry, employee and women's groups.

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Draft Framework for Reporting Measures under the Gender Equality Indicators

