

MEDIA RELEASE

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Stagnant gender pay gap a \$26,600 wake-up call for employers to pick up the pace

New national data shows gender pay gap stuck at 22.8%

Progress to close the gender pay gap between Australian women and men has stalled for the first time in 2022, according to the latest annual data released today by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

The world-leading annual dataset on gender equality has revealed **progress has stalled**, with the gender pay gap remaining at 22.8%. It means **women earned, on average, \$26,596 less than men** in 2021-22.

The WGEA *2021-22 Employer Census* also finds that although the number of female CEOs has risen slightly from last year, still **only 22% of CEOs are women**. Men are more likely to hold managerial positions, even in female-dominated industries such as healthcare and education.

This is despite research showing that profitability and productivity increase under women's leadership. More women in key decision-making positions also contributes to improved company performance¹, yet just 1 in 5 governing boards are gender-balanced, while **more than 1 in 5 boards have no women at all**.

Since 2014, the number of boards without women has dropped from 37% to 22%, but 72% of boards are still comprised of a significant majority (>60%) of men. Less than one per cent of boards comprise only women.

The WGEA *Employer Census* finds that more employers are offering paid primary carers leave than last year (62%, compared to 60% in 2021), with 92% of those offering it equally to women and men.

New voluntary reporting shows **53% of employers have set some form of target for gender equality** in the workplace.

Of those who have set targets, more than half (55%) have done so to increase the number of women in leadership. Far fewer employers have targets to reduce the gender pay gap (38%), increase the number of men taking parental leave (19%), increase male take up of flexible work arrangements (16%), or boost the number of men in female-dominated roles (14%).

In good news for employees who want the flexibility to choose how, when and where they work, new voluntarily reporting showed many workplaces are moving to an 'all roles flex' model.

Nearly 2 in 5 employers (38%) who responded to the new question, reported they have implemented an 'all-roles flex' approach, ensuring the focus is on work output and outcomes, not hours spent in the office.

Agency Director Mary Wooldridge said the stagnant gender pay gap must be a signal to employers to pick up the pace by implementing policies and practices that evidence shows contribute to improved gender equality.

¹ BCEC WGEA [Gender Equity Insights 2020: Delivering the Business Outcomes](#)



“At a time when Australia is experiencing a critical skills and labour shortage, WGEA’s annual Employer Census shows that too many employers have failed to step up on gender equality leaving many women no better off than they were 12 months ago,” Ms Wooldridge said.

“A pay gap of 22.8% means women earn an average of \$26,600 less than men, based on their gender. This failure to improve needs to be a clarion call for all employers.”

Ms Wooldridge said committed, leading employers are picking up the pace of change.

“Lasting change requires employers to make bold, creative choices that send a signal to all employees that gender equality is a core part of their business strategy and a priority for those in leadership and managerial roles,” Ms Wooldridge said.

“Leading employers are already putting solutions in place that address challenges like workforce shortages by tailoring factory shifts around school pick-up and drop-off times or promoting – and role-modelling – flexible hours or part-time work arrangements among managers and executives.”

Employers are encouraged to find and compare how their organisations are tracking using the Agency’s Data Explorer at www.wgea.gov.au/data-statistics/data-explorer

“This is a chance to measure how your organisation’s workforce composition and policies and strategies for recruitment, promotion and retention shape up against the competition,” Ms Wooldridge said.

“Because if you’re not making progress on these things, your employees will realise there are others who are.”

Australia’s Gender Equality Scorecard will be officially launched by WGEA Director Mary Wooldridge in an online event at 11.00AM today (December 12).

You can tune into the 10-minute live stream via [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)

View the full Scorecard now at www.wgea.gov.au

Media contact: Emma Manser *WGEA Media & Communications Manager*

M 0437 225 386 | **E** emma.manser@wgea.gov.au