

MEDIA RELEASE

19 November 2019

Australia's latest gender equality scorecard released today

- **Gender pay gap drops to 20.8% but men out-earn women by \$25,679 on average**
- **Big jump in employer action on family and domestic violence**
- **More women in management roles but no increase in female CEOs**

More Australian employers are taking action to promote gender equality in their organisations but the pace of change is modest and uneven according to data released today by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA).

The sixth year of WGEA data shows the strongest progress towards workplace gender equality are in those areas where employers have a direct influence on the outcome. There was incremental growth in employer action on overall gender equality policies and strategies, pay equity and flexible work.

The stand-out result was a substantial increase in employer action on family and domestic violence. There was a 13.3 percentage point (pp) jump in the number of employers with a policy or strategy on family and domestic violence and an 8.9 pp increase in employers offering paid domestic violence leave.

This year's findings also showed a small increase in the representation of women in management but the number of female CEOs has not changed, remaining at 17.1% for the second year in a row. Access to paid parental leave improved but more than 50% of employers offer no paid parental leave.

WGEA's data also highlights some key areas where more effort is needed. In the female-dominated industry of Health Care and Social Assistance, the gender pay gap in favour of men has barely shifted in three years. There was also little improvement in the representation of women on boards.

The Agency's Director, Libby Lyons, said that the latest results of WGEA's world-leading dataset covering over four million employees demonstrates the importance of measuring gender equality outcomes in Australian workplaces.

"This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1969 equal pay decision which first saw Australian women win the right to be paid the same as men for doing the same work, or work of equal or comparable value," said Ms Lyons.

"Yet 50 years on, women and men still have very different experiences of work. Our data shows that pay gaps favouring men persist in all industries, occupations and manager categories. I always welcome a reduction in the gender pay gap, but a drop of only 0.5 percentage points is slow progress by anyone's measure.

“After six years, the Agency’s data shows that when employers take action, it makes a difference. Women’s promotions and appointments to managerial roles are rising every year. Over seven in ten employers now have policies or strategies to support gender equality or promote flexible working. Action on addressing pay equity continues to grow.

“The most positive development this year is the sharp increase in employer action on family and domestic violence. At a time when confronting the scourge of domestic violence is at the forefront of our national consciousness, it is heartening to see Australian employers making an important contribution to dealing with this issue in their workplaces.

“However, our data also highlights some key problem areas. Despite an improvement in the provision of paid parental leave, over half of the employers in our dataset do not offer it. Women are still hitting the glass ceiling at the highest levels. The number of women CEOs has stalled and Australia’s boardroom tables remain dominated by men.

“This year, it is fair to say that overall improvement has been modest at best. Clearly more work has to be done to sustain the momentum for change in our workplaces,” said Ms Lyons.

Note to media: data graphics and video are available on request

Contact: Murray Black 0438 071 876 / **E** murray.black@wgea.gov.au

Note: A gender pay gap is the difference between the average male full-time earnings and average female full-time earnings expressed as a percentage of male earnings. We calculate gender pay gaps across the data set by industry and by manager and occupational categories, excluding CEO salaries. The Agency’s gender pay gap data does not reflect comparisons of women and men in the same roles (that is, like-for-like gaps).

The gender pay gap is not the difference between two people being paid differently for work of equal or comparable value. This is unequal pay and it is unlawful.

About the Workplace Gender Equality Agency

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. www.wgea.gov.au

About the data

Under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012*, non-public sector employers with 100 or more staff must report to the WGEA annually against six gender equality indicators:

GEI 1: the gender composition of the workforce

GEI 2: gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employers

GEI 3: equal remuneration between women and men

GEI 4: 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

GEI 5: consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace

GEI 6: sex-based harassment and discrimination.

The dataset for 2018-19 covered over four million employees, representing more than 40% of employees in Australia. The reporting period was 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Key Findings: 2018-19 data

Gender pay gap

- The total remuneration gender pay gap is 20.8% (down 0.5pp)
- Men out-earn women by \$25,679 a year on average
- The pay gap in favour of men barely shifted the female-dominated industry of Health Care and Social Assistance (up 1.2pp from 14.7% in 2015-16 to 15.9% in 2018-19)

Family and domestic violence

- Big increase in employer action on family and domestic violence
- 13.3pp jump in employers with a policy or strategy (up to 60.2%)
- 8.9pp increase in employer provision of paid domestic violence leave (up to 30.3%)

Parental leave

- Six-year high in the provision of employer-funded paid parental leave but over half the employers in the Agency's dataset still do not offer it
- Access is variable and highly dependent on the size and industry of the employer
- 49.4% of employers offered paid primary carer's leave (up 1.6pp)
- 43.8% of employers offered paid secondary carer's leave (up 2.0pp)

Lack of women at CEO and Board level

- The glass ceiling is still a barrier for women at top leadership levels
- No change from last year's figures in the number of female CEOs (17.1%)
- Only a 1.0pp increase in the number of female board directors (up to 26.8%)

Flexible work

- More employers are promoting flexible work (up 2.0pp to 72.7%)
- But an action gap remains: only 5.6% have set targets for employee engagement and only 2.3% have set targets for men's engagement

Women in management

- Women now comprise 39.4% of all managers in the WGEA dataset
- 43.8% of manager promotions and appointments went to women

Pay equity

- Increased employer action on pay equity
- 3.1 pp increase in the number employers doing a pay gap analysis (up to 44.7%)
- But an action gap remains as almost 40% of these employers took no action to close their pay gaps

Gender equality policies and strategies

- Continued growth in employers implementing gender equality policies and strategies
- Over three-quarters of employers now have a gender equality strategy or policy
- Only 32.2% have implemented KPIs for managers relating to gender equality outcomes