

Q&A: 2022 Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Snapshot: Voluntary reporting results

Why was the 2022 voluntary public sector reporting program introduced?

Recommendation 43 of the landmark Respect@Work: Sexual Harassment National Inquiry Report, released by the Australian Human Rights Commission in March 2020, proposed that the Government should lead by example on gender equality by requiring public sector organisations to report to the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) on its gender equality indicators.

To prepare for these changes, WGEA rolled out a series of voluntary reporting programs. In 2021, WGEA worked with a five Commonwealth and three State and Territory agencies who expressed keen interest in reporting. We replicated the processes and data collection tools from the annual private sector Gender Equality Census and provided intensive support to the reporting employers.

We used the findings from this pilot to update the data collection tools, processes, educational materials and data outputs to better meet the needs of public sector agencies, before rolling out a comprehensive voluntary reporting program in 2022.

The passing of the *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Bill 2022*, made reporting to WGEA mandatory for Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees as of 2023.

The results of the 2022 voluntary Commonwealth public sector reporting program have helped refine the reporting process before mandatory reporting, and provide a template for employers for how the reporting process will run and outcomes will be presented.

Who participated in the 2022 voluntary public sector reporting program?

All Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees were invited to participate in the 2022 voluntary public sector reporting program. WGEA also participated in the program, despite having under 100 employees, in order to more deeply understand the reporting experience.

In total, 52 employers, including Non-corporate and Corporate Commonwealth Entities and Commonwealth Companies reported as part of the voluntary program. Participating employers included 40 agencies who engage staff under the Public Service Act (APS agencies), spanning extra small to extra large in size, and 12 non APS agencies.

Please see a full list of all participating organisations on page 25 of the 2022 Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Snapshot.

Why is this report a Snapshot and not a Scorecard like the private sector? Will WGEA produce a Scorecard next year?

Mandatory Commonwealth public sector reporting from 2023 will expand WGEA's public sector dataset from 52 to 112 reporting organisations. With that in mind, and given the voluntary nature of last year's reporting, we have named this document a "Snapshot" because it cannot be seen as a complete analysis of gender equality in the public sector, and some findings in this report may differ from next year's results. In future, WGEA will produce an annual Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Scorecard similar to our



Private Sector Gender Equality Scorecard, which will set out the results of Commonwealth public sector reporting, identifying trends and highlighting areas for action.

What will this Snapshot be used for?

The 2022 Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Snapshot is a publicly available document that contains the results of the 2022 voluntary Commonwealth public sector reporting program. The report can be found on WGEA's [website](#).

All statements made in the Snapshot refer to the sample dataset of 52 employers. The Snapshot should not be used for in-depth analysis of gender equality in the public sector, nor should it be used as a benchmark for trend analysis in the years to come. What it does show, however, are overall trends that are likely to shape future reporting on the Commonwealth public sector. In this way, the Snapshot serves as an appetiser for policy makers, employers and the broader public to understand gender equality in the Commonwealth public sector.

Will my agency's individual results be published?

Given the 2022 Commonwealth public sector reporting program was voluntary, WGEA will not publish individual agency reporting results.

Individual agency reporting results will be published from 2023 in line with mandatory reporting for Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees.

For more information on how the Agency shares data provided to it by relevant employers, head to the WGEA [website](#).

How do the findings in this report differ from the Australian Public Service Commissions (APSC) data?

WGEA's 2022 Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Snapshot represents the gender equality outcomes of 52 voluntary reporting Commonwealth employers against its six gender equality indicators. Of the 52 participating employers, 40 were APS agencies and 12 were non-APS agencies.

It is due to these different datasets, that the findings in this report differs from the APSC data. For example, as demonstrated in the report, even when the gender pay gap is calculated on base salary only, the gender pay gap presented in this Snapshot is different from the APSC calculations.

WGEA collects additional information to determine the state of gender equality in the workforce, including data on parental leave policies, consultation on gender equality issues, target setting to improve gender equality in the workforce and more. Given WGEA's expertise in workplace gender equality, and the specificity of the questions against the gender equality indicators, WGEA's report specifically examines workforce data from a gender perspective.

How does WGEA calculate the gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between the earnings for men and women, expressed as a percentage of men's earnings. Different gender pay gaps come about as a result of different datasets, but the mathematical formula is the same.

WGEA uses the data directly provided to us by employers to calculate the gender pay gap. This calculation uses total remuneration, including superannuation, overtime, bonuses, and other additional payments. WGEA includes full-time employee's remuneration, and we convert part-time and casual employee remuneration in annualised full-time equivalent earnings.

To enable comparison, WGEA has included the base salary gender pay gap of the 52 voluntary reporting Commonwealth employers.

How can we improve our results?

Improving organisational performance on gender equality takes time. WGEA has many tools and guides to support employers to address gender equality issues and opportunities. Visit WGEA's [website](#) for more information.

When does mandatory public sector reporting begin?

Mandatory Commonwealth public sector reporting will occur between **1 September and 31 October 2023** for the 2022 year.

Will gender pay gaps be published for the first year of mandatory public sector reporting?

In March 2023, parliament passed the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Bill 2023*. Under the new legislation, WGEA will publish employer gender pay gaps, in addition to publishing the gender pay gap at a national, industry and occupational level.

Commonwealth public sector employer gender pay gaps will be published in line with these changes. Given the public sector reporting program takes place at a different time to the private sector, the first publication of Commonwealth public sector employer's gender pay gaps will be published in late 2024 or early 2025.