

Data Governance Framework

Workplace Gender Equality Agency

May 2020



Publication and amendment details

Publication Details

Document Reference	WGEA-DGF 2020
Version Number	1.1
Released for publication by (Signature)	
Appointment	Director
Date of Publication	12/05/2020

Amendment Details

Version Number	Amendment Detail	Amendment Date	Edited By
1.0	Original	7 Sept 2017	Data Governance Committee
1.1	Updated: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Included responsibility of Data Governance Committee- Deleted Data Management Principles	12 May 2020	Data Governance Committee

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Message from the Director

The rich dataset held by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Agency) is a testament to the determination of the business community and the Australian Government to work together to address gender inequality in the workplace.

The sole purpose for collecting the data is to drive change to remove the barriers to women and men's equal participation and reward at work.

The dataset provides a comprehensive picture of women and men's experiences at work. It is rich in detail including promotion rates, employer actions and employee remuneration across occupations and manager categories. It provides the evidence base we need to identify and address the factors causing unequal outcomes for women and men at work.

This Data Governance Framework outlines our commitment to managing the data we hold with care. Our aim is to maintain robust, best practice data management policies; from the collection and storage to the analysis and promotion of the data.

With this Framework, Australian employers and employees can be sure that the Agency is doing its part to safeguard the confidential information, which is the foundation of this shared initiative.

Libby Lyons

Director

Introduction

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (Agency) is an Australian Government statutory agency created by the **Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012**. (the Act)

The charge of the Agency is to promote and improve gender equality in Australian workplaces.

We work collaboratively with employers providing advice, practical tools and education resources to help them improve their performance in terms of workplace gender equality. Our staff are workplace gender equality specialists and provide industry-specific advice.

The Agency also works with employers to help them comply with the reporting requirements under the Act. These reporting requirements aim to encourage measures that improve gender equality outcomes. At all times, we aim to minimise the regulatory burden on business.

This Data Governance Framework (Framework) provides a structure for the development, promotion and implementation of good data management practices. The Agency is committed to well-defined, best practice data management policies and procedures. We support this through staff training and support systems that make effective data management part of our every day work practices.

technical data literacy. The data steward is also responsible for ensuring that appropriate data management education, training and support is developed and delivered to staff.

All data holdings within our organisation will be assigned to the data steward. The data steward will have responsibility for justifying the acquisition, retention, processing and reporting of data through associating this use with defined organisational goals and outcomes.

The role of Agency data steward will be held by the Research and Analytics Executive Manager for all of the organisation's data holdings.

Strategic vision for the Agency's data

The Agency's vision is for the equal representation women and men in the workplace and that they are equally valued and rewarded. Critical to the delivery of this vision is strong data governance and management processes that establish the Agency as a best practice data agency. Ensuring Agency staff have key data management capabilities support these processes.

The Agency's strategic mission is to lead, influence and inspire change to promote gender equality in Australian workplaces utilising our world leading dataset.				
Data governance, policies and procedures				
Data management capabilities				
Security, access and privacy	Manage the data life cycle	Mine the data for insights	Use the data to communicate	Quality control
	Storage	Processing	Reporting	
	Cleaning	Analysis	Sharing	
	Metadata standards	Integration	Analytics	
	Staff education, support and training			
IT software, systems and support				

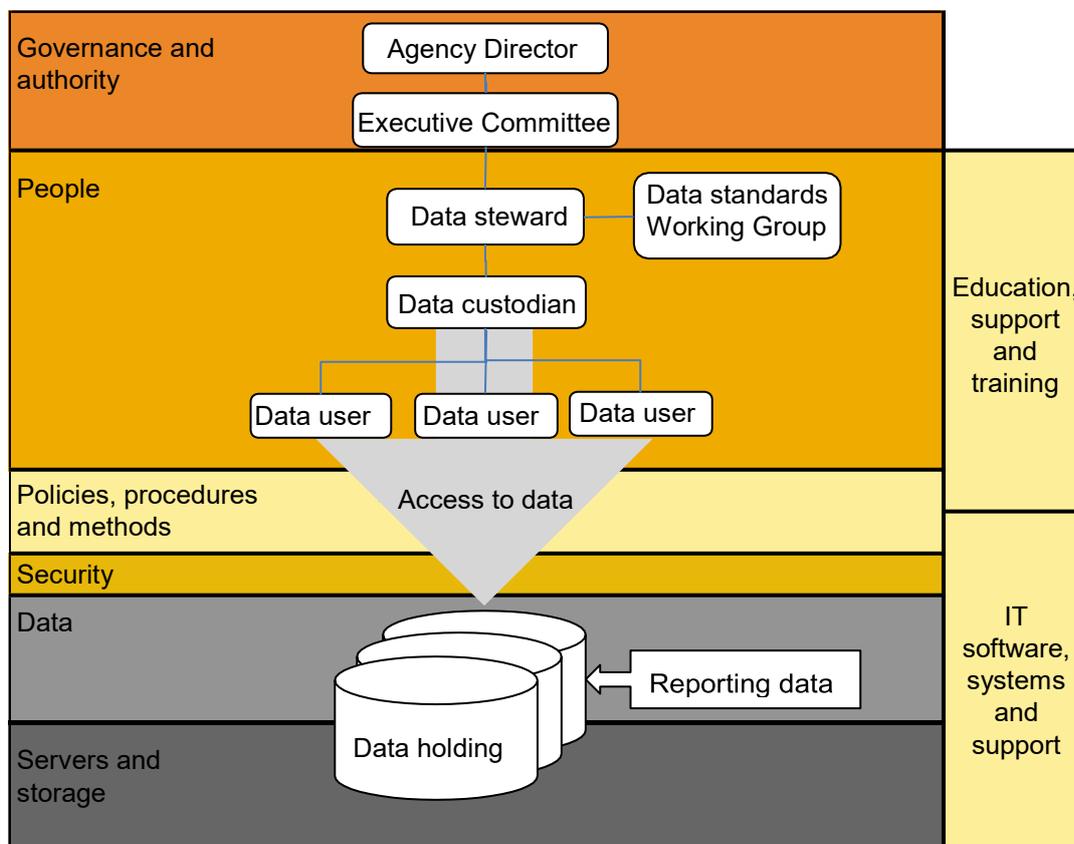
The development of the Agency's data governance and management processes focus on the security and privacy of organisations that in accordance with the Act report to the Agency. A secure ICT infrastructure environment and a commitment to quality control processes support this process.

Purpose of the Framework

The Framework aims to support data management through the stages of planning, collecting, processing, analysing, publishing and archiving of data. It enables the consistent application of data management terminology and practices, and supports staff in the performance of their data management roles.

In the context of this Framework, data governance refers to:

“a system of decision rights and accountabilities for information-related processes, executed according to agreed-upon models which describe who can take what actions, with what information and when, under what circumstances, using what methods¹”.



WGEA Data Governance Framework

Data management refers to the ‘agreed upon models’ in the definition above. It is:

“the development, execution and supervision of plans, policies, programs and practices that control, protect, deliver and enhance the value of data and information assets²”.

Data management requires shared responsibility between three areas of expertise:

¹ The Data Governance Institute http://www.datagovernance.com/adg_data_governance_definition/ accessed 09/02/2017

² The DAMA Guide to the Data Management Body of Knowledge (DAMA-DMBOK), 1st Edition 2009, p.4

1. **Governance and authority**, which provides strategic intent and business goals of the organisation as well as the boundaries of the Agency's work. This also defines and promotes the Agency's data management activities and provides supporting resources for these activities.
2. **People**, in their roles as data stewards, data custodians and data users are involved in the day-to-day acquisition, storage, management and dissemination of the Agency's data.
3. **Systems**, in the form of policies and procedures, security, software, hardware and applications that support effective data management.

This Framework articulates the key responsibilities of Agency staff in defined roles, as they relate to data management.

Some of the processes of data governance and management will evolve in response to the Agency's current and future priorities. This framework provides a structure within which these processes can be developed and authorised.

Definition of data

The concept of data is not always straightforward. In the world of data, the existence of a defined data object is not always clear. For example, a report sent to the Agency based on its 2016-17 reporting questionnaire and workplace profile is a data object which may then be queried, processed and resubmitted which in turn creates an additional data object. This subsequent inclusion of this report with reports from other reporting organisations will create the annual WGEA dataset (another data object). The WGEA dataset may then be processed and extracted for specific analyses and reporting (e.g. using statistical or business intelligence tools) to produce more data objects such as the WGEA Scorecard or the Agency's [Competitor Analysis Benchmark Reports](#).

The preferred term for each of these objects is a data holding. The Agency defines a data holding as *a cohesive set of data, designed to address specific organisational needs, which may be created externally and provided to the Agency or generated internally, either by direct collection or modification of existing data.*

A data holding is:

- a defined purpose or set of purposes
- an asset using agreed metadata
- lead by the data steward with responsibility for management of the data within the organisation
- managed by at least one data custodian with responsibility for the operational aspects of handling the data
- a master/source file stored in a single location
- a community of people who use the data
- has policies and procedures that define how the data is created, updated, retrieved, checked, used and destroyed
- has metadata that records how and when the above processes occur

The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Act)* as amended by *Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2013 (No. 1)* establishes a set of six gender equality indicators. These gender equality indicators may be quantitative or qualitative measurements that allow for a reporting organisation to be assessed based on comparison with an agreed standard, target or with data from another point in time.

The Agency manages the data holdings as part of the data management practices.

Scope of the Framework

Data can be stored in:

- structured formats such as databases
- semi-structured formats such as spreadsheets
- published formats including content on websites
- non-structured formats such as emails and documents.

The scope of the Framework is the life-cycle management of all of these types of data as they relate to reporting against the gender equality indicators.

Data governance within the Agency

Data governance refers to the authority the Agency has to collect, store, analyse, process and publish data as well as the decisions made with this authority. The Act establishes the requirement for relevant employers to provide reports to the Agency and for the Agency to use these reports to perform a range of functions. These include:

- collection and analysis of information provided by relevant employers under the Act (s10.1.d)
- development of benchmarks in relation to gender equality indicators (s10.1.aa)
- undertaking research, educational programs and other programs for the purpose of promoting and improving gender equality in the workplace (s10.1.e)
- publishing of public reports by electronic or other means (s15.1.a).

The Act provides the Agency with the overall authority to acquire and manage data. In addition, the Agency is subject to a range of obligations under legislation such as the *Archives Act 1983* and the *Privacy Act 1988* as well as the [Australian Government Protective Security Policy Framework](#).

Within the Agency, specific roles and responsibilities are required for data governance and management.

1. Agency Director – the Director has responsibility for the management of the Agency and for the Agency discharging its responsibilities under the Act.
2. Executive Committee – the Executive Committee collectively leads and takes responsibility for the day-to-day performance of the Agency and supports the role of the Director. The specific responsibilities of the Executive Committee include:
 - ensuring rules and procedures are in place to support ethical behaviour and provide guidance on appropriate work methods
 - providing final approval of an appropriate set of policies and ensuring that these are put in place to support the operation of the Agency
 - ensuring that employees are provided the training and tools necessary to fulfil their duties.
3. Data steward – A data steward is a role within the Agency, which manages the quality and use of the Agency's data holdings from an organisational perspective. A data steward is a subject matter expert with a base level of technical data literacy.

4. Data Governance Committee – The Data Governance Committee, established in September 2019, reports to the Executive Committee on matters relating to data management and the new data collections and data management system. Responsibilities of the Data Governance Committee and include:
 - development and implementation of data management policies and procedures, including data migration strategy development
 - development, oversight and coordination of the development of data specifications for gender equality indicators and contextual information produced by the Agency
 - development, oversight and coordination of the Agency standards in relation to access, use and disclosure of data.
5. Data custodian – A data custodian is a role within the Agency, which performs operational management of the collection, storage and use of one or more data holdings. Data custodians have high levels of data literacy in addition to skills in data-management software systems and tools.
6. Data user – Data users are those staff within the Agency who need access to the data for analysis and the production of Agency reports. They are not custodians or stewards of the data. Data users will have varying levels of data literacy and data management skills.
7. IT and systems support – IT and systems support refers to a range of experts who provide specialist hardware, software and systems advice and support to the data steward and data custodian.

Role of the Executive Committee as it relates to data management

As part of its role overseeing the implementation of this framework, the Executive Committee has responsibility for:

- final approval of the Agency's data management policies and promotion of these policies
- setting short and medium term goals for data management activities
- ensuring that the Agency has appropriate information architecture for the storage and management of data and gender equality indicators.

Role of the data steward

A data steward is normally a senior role within an organisation, with responsibility for specific data holdings. A data steward will understand the organisation's requirements for collecting and holding data, as well as its permitted uses, publication and dissemination.

Data stewards have dual roles in education and training. Collectively they are responsible for ensuring that data custodians and data users have an awareness and understanding of the Agency's data management policies and procedures, and access to appropriate education and training in order to implement those policies and procedures. For each of the data holdings under their care, data stewards also have a responsibility to ensure that their users have access to the information (mostly in the form of metadata) and skills they require to correctly access and use that data.

A data steward will provide clear delegation and instructions to data custodians so that security privileges to their data holdings are maintained and monitored.

Data stewards require access to IT support tools to allow them to view and monitor their data holdings attached to their data steward role.

The Agency's data steward is the Chair of the Data Governance Committee.

Role of the Data Governance Committee

The Data Governance Committee reports to the Executive Committee. It has responsibility for:

- establishing and reviewing an overall program of standards, monitoring and compliance, which includes the allocation of data holdings to a data steward and data custodians
- setting, implementing and monitoring data quality in accordance with the [Data Quality Declaration](#), data standards for:
 - the storage and use of data holdings
 - security of data holdings
 - data quality
 - metadata requirements and solutions
 - other data management compliance measures as required
- preparation of annual [Data Quality Report](#)
- resolving issues raised by data stewards, data custodians and data users
- participating in the development of IT solutions for data management activities
- initiating reviews and audits of the Agency's data management practices.

Role of the data custodian

A data custodian has delegated operational management of specific data holdings by a data steward. This means that they will be involved in the design of data acquisition, receipt and storage, processing, analysis, reporting, publication, dissemination and archival or deletion of data. Data custodians generally have considerable skills in using data and the associated software tools and systems.

Where a data custodian is unsure of their authority to access, process, report or disseminate data they should refer issues to the data steward.

Data custodians require IT support tools to allow them to view and monitor the data. This includes access to effective metadata so that they can fully understand the context, definitions, meaning and data quality indicators for the data

they are using. They require considerable training and education, and generally benefit from peer review and sharing mechanisms so that expertise in data storage and process is available to other data custodians as a learning tool.

Data custodians can be required to provide assistance and support services to data users for the data under their control.

The actions of data custodians must be transparent to the data steward. It is possible for the same person to perform the dual roles of data steward and data custodian.

Role of data users

A data user will have access to specific data holdings to be able to analyse and report on the data. They will vary in their level of technical data literacy, subject matter knowledge and security clearance, so it may be appropriate for them to be a 'read-only' user, able to interrogate and use the data but not have the authority to update or delete the data.

By having access to data they are assuming responsibility for its correct use, analysis, interpretation, reporting and publication. They must be supported in this role through effective IT systems, education and training.

Where a data user is unsure of their authority to access, analyse, report or disseminate data they should in the first instance, refer issues to a data custodian.

The actions of data users must be transparent to the data custodians. It is possible that an individual be both a data custodian and a data user.

Role of IT and systems support

The data steward, data custodians and data users need access to user-friendly and appropriate data systems, hardware and software tools in order to effectively store, process and access data. In order to provide and maintain these systems, the Agency needs access to IT systems expertise.

One of the key requirements for the Agency is an integrated data management solution. The Agency has an ongoing requirement for an integrated data management solution that can accommodate a variety of user needs and outputs. This system also requires a certain degree of continuity and transferability with Australian government standards for data collection and storage.

There are many hardware and software options available for data storage, processing, analysis, reporting and publication. The Agency should assess the most appropriate tool for the task, and make this assessment in the context of its full suite of data management policies.

Over time, there is an expectation that the Agency will embark on a program of continuous improvement to its processing and reporting systems, and will continue to require efficient IT and systems support to specify, acquire, build, implement and maintain these systems. External partners or agencies may provide this IT support as this internal strategic and technical IT role is still crucial for effective data management.

Policies and procedures

The accompanying [data management policies](#) cover the following topics:

1. Data governance
 - Authority for Agency's work
 - Approvals within the Agency
 - Role allocation within the Agency
2. Data access and storage
 - Information security
 - Use of corporate data solutions
 - Documenting business processes
3. Data quality
 - Data quality model and statements
 - Data cleaning activities
 - Changes to reporting data
 - Responsibility for data quality and commitment to improvement
4. Data processing and analysis
 - Recording processing metadata
 - Use of standard methods
5. Data reporting, sharing and dissemination
 - Release of public reports
 - Agency use of remuneration data
 - Open data

- Data requests
- 6. Metadata management
 - Recording and updating metadata
- 7. Staff education, support and training
 - Role definitions and support
 - Responsibility for providing education, support and training