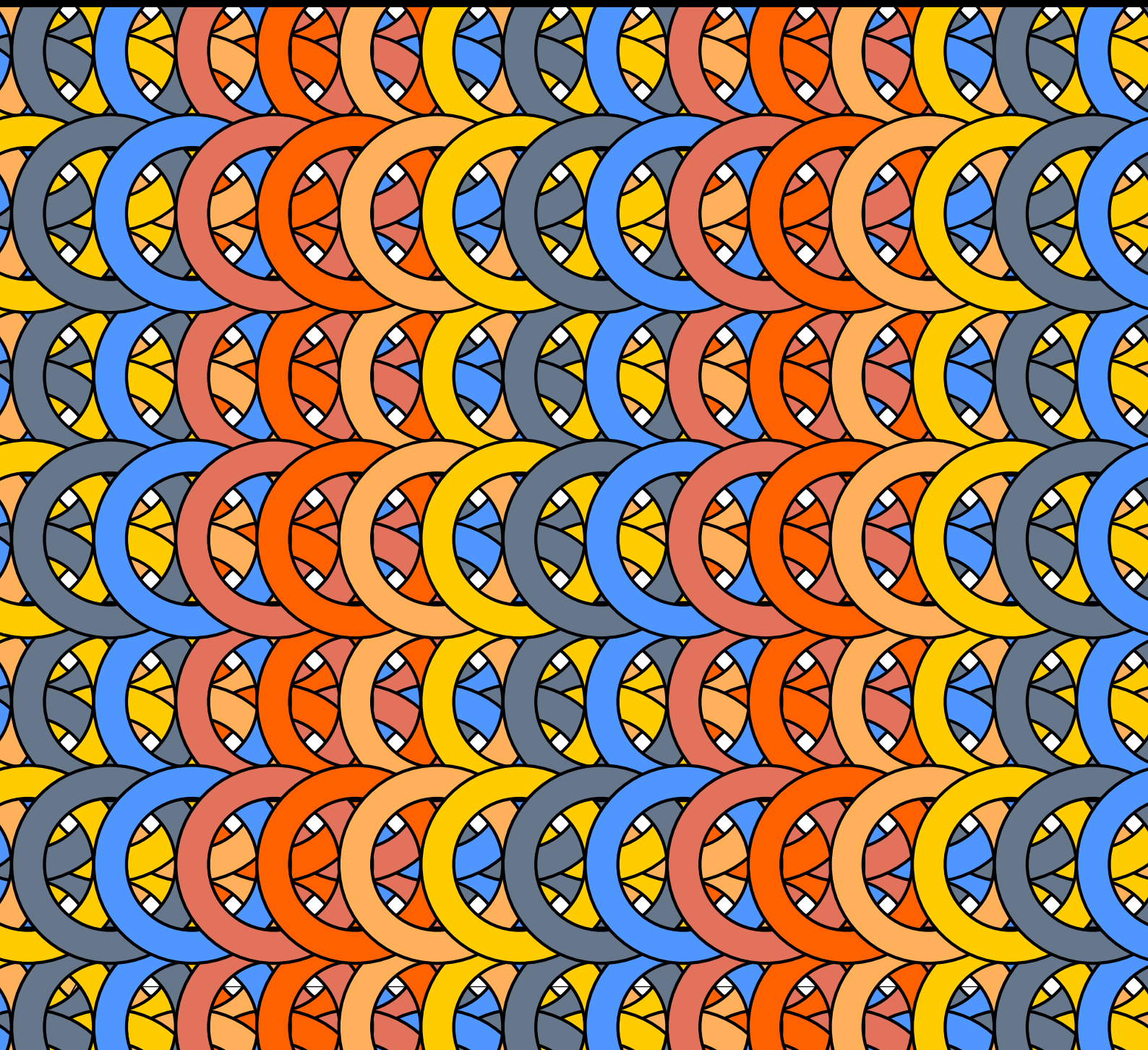


Progress Report

2022–24

1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024



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An electronic copy of this report is available at:

www.wgea.gov.au/about/governance/progress-report



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You can explore all of WGEA's data using the Data Explorer
www.wgea.gov.au/Data-Explorer

Acknowledgement of Country

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to lands, waters and communities. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and to Elders past and present.

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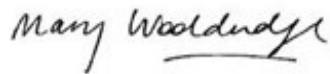
30 May 2025
Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher
Minister for Women
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

In accordance with subsection 12 (2A) of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (the Act) I am pleased to present the 2 yearly report on progress against the gender equality indicators.

You approved submission of this report by the end of March 2025, but I delayed providing as the government was in caretaker period.

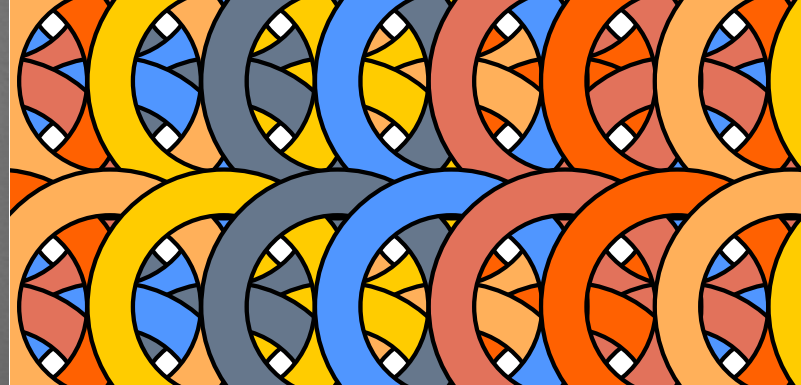
The report covers the period 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2024 and for the first time includes data from the Commonwealth public sector, creating a baseline from which to measure progress in future reports.



Mary Wooldridge

CEO
Workplace Gender Equality Agency





CEO letter

After a period of slowing action, the Australian Government has decisively prioritised workplace gender equality as an essential requirement for national economic growth and enhanced the expectations on employers to make sustainable improvements. Maintaining the momentum of this renewed focus is critical to accelerating progress.

The timeframe of this report correlates with a period of significant legislative reform to achieve this goal. As a result of these reforms, WGEA published gender pay gaps for employers with 100 or more employees for the first time in February 2024. Commonwealth public sector employers began reporting to WGEA in 2023 and their gender pay gaps were published for the first time in 2025. Employers with 500 or more employees have new requirements to have policies for each of the gender equality indicators. Recent legislative amendments require employers with 500 or more direct employees to select and achieve or improve against gender equality targets from 2026.

These changes set a new bar for performance, placing accountability for progressing workplace gender equality squarely on employers' shoulders. The employer reporting data represented in this Progress Report covers the period before gender pay gaps were first published and therefore should be seen as a baseline for future employer action. Employees can also consider the results a baseline of what they can expect from an employer in terms of access, opportunities and outcomes at work.

The good news is employers took valuable action to improve performance, in anticipation of the implementation of the legislative reforms.

WGEA's data shows large increases in the proportion of employers that conducted a gender pay gap analysis and acted on the results. More employers consulted their employees and implemented policies to improve gender equality across each of the 6 GEIs. Employers deepened their policies and actions to address sexual harassment and discrimination in the light of positive duty requirements and they increased their support to employees experiencing family and domestic violence.

Pleasingly many employers are looking to accelerate change, with WGEA's support. Responding to this need, the Agency now offers 1:1 support for employers, masterclasses and comprehensive guides. WGEA has improved reporting processes and employer reports to help employers take more effective, evidence-based action that will lead to lasting change.

Some of the results in this report have not recently recorded substantial shifts, particularly around gender composition of the workforce. However, the actions mentioned above are essential first steps that will help shift workforce composition in the longer run.

Progress can also come from broadening the understanding of workplace gender equality beyond improvements that boost women's participation to positive workplace changes that enable both women and men to fulfill their potential at work and beyond work. WGEA's data included in this report shows men still lack equal access to parental leave and employers are less likely to prioritise actions that will boost men's employment in women-dominated roles and industries. The recent legislative change regarding selecting and achieving targets will help lead to increased attention in these areas, with the legislation specifically referring to an under-represented gender instead of men and women.

The outlook is positive but effective change takes time.

I am hopeful that in another two years, when WGEA submits the next Progress Report to the Minister, indicators of gender equality which have been slower to shift will show improvement because of thoughtful, considered, evidence-informed employer action.

WGEA will continue to do all that we can to support employers to ensure that all workplaces are fair and safe for all employees.

Mary Wooldridge





Executive summary

Australia is at the start of a renewed push to improve workplace gender equality sparked by extensive legislative reforms. This report shows in part what employers were doing in anticipation of those reforms, and the opportunities for progress that lie ahead.

WGEA's world-leading dataset is a critical enabler of this progress. It provides comprehensive insight into the state of workplace gender equality in Australia and how it has progressed over the past decade. The insights and trends that can be drawn from analysis of this dataset reveal opportunities for practical, evidence-based actions that can generate positive change for employers and employees alike. New information reported during the timeframe of this report such as CEO remuneration and employee age enable deeper insights into the workplace inequality and the possibility of more targeted actions to create sustainable change. WGEA has also improved access to and visualisation of publicly available data for employers, policymakers and the broader community to enable more people to understand the state of play and generate ideas for improvement.

The legislative reforms during the past two years articulated higher expectations for Australian workplaces and increased accountability for progress on employers. Alongside broader action such as the first national strategy for gender equality, *Working for Women* and a new National Employment Standard guaranteeing employees access to 10 days of paid leave for family and domestic violence, Parliament passed the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023*, and the Government remade the associated Legislative Instruments in March 2023. This introduced a range of enhancements to the Act that governs WGEA, including requiring the Agency to publish employer gender pay gaps from 2024, setting a new Gender Equality Standard for employers with 500 or more employees, and expanded reporting requirements related to sexual harassment.

The March 2025 passage of the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Act 2025* that requires employers with 500 or more direct employees to select, achieve or make progress on gender equality targets will further spur employer action and engagement.

Throughout this period of change, WGEA has continued to strengthen its support to employers to help them understand and meet their requirements under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (the Act). The Agency disseminated resources and education programs explaining the legislative changes and what they mean for employers and employees alike. WGEA also provided enhanced reports for employers to understand their data and how they compare with peers, and articulated compliance requirements through the publication of WGEA's first Compliance Strategy.



WGEA also supported employers to move beyond compliance to consider evidence-based actions that will make workplaces fairer and safer. This included providing educational resources, masterclasses, and direct advice to employers. WGEA also conducted a review of its Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation (citation) to strengthen its standards while providing more opportunities for employers to be recognised for their leading practice approach.

The initial signs are that employers are responding positively to these reforms and WGEA's support initiatives.

While workforce gender segregation is still occurring at an occupational and industry level, more employers are taking action to improve their policies and strategies in this area. The new requirement for employers with 500 or more employees to select and achieve or improve against gender equality targets has the potential to further shift the dial as employers analyse their data and develop comprehensive evidence-informed action plans.

The requirement for Commonwealth public sector employers to report to WGEA from 2023 has revealed a stark difference in the gender-balance of their board members compared to the private sector. Membership of governing bodies in the Commonwealth public sector is gender-balanced, likely the result of target setting. This success suggests that private sector employers could benefit from selecting and reporting on gender equality targets to improve the gender balance of their board.

WGEA's publication of employer gender pay gaps has been a watershed moment for many employers. A record number are engaging with their data and seeking to understand the drivers of inequality by conducting a gender pay gap analysis. Importantly more employers are also taking action on the results of this analysis. Progress on closing the gender pay gap has re-gained momentum with the majority of employers reducing their gaps since 2022.

After booming during the pandemic, the number of employers with formal policies and strategies for flexible working continues to rise. Employers are broadening the types of flexible work offered to employees beyond working from home. Higher rates of flexible work in the Commonwealth public sector are a likely contributing factor to the higher rates of employees that work full-time. Improving access to flexible work could be an opportunity for private sector employers to accelerate progress in towards a gender-balanced workforce in future years.

More employers are offering paid parental leave and the proportion of men taking primary carer's leave is slowly increasing. Opportunities for progress can come from expanding the supports available to parents and carers and developing strategies to break down stereotypes that prevent men from accessing their entitlements.

There has also been a significant increase in the number of employers that are consulting their employees on their experience of gender equality in the workplace. This qualitative data provides important information that can help employers to refine their actions.

New data reported to WGEA by employers shows an opportunity for accelerating progress to prevent sexual harassment and harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination through broadening training, increasing the involvement and communication from the board and extending supports to bystanders to encourage cultural change. Recent requirements for employers to share their WEGA reports with their governing body should bring more focus from board members to this critical risk area in future.

WGEA's employer data shows that progress is happening. The momentum on workplace gender equality over the past few years has set new standards for employers and their legislative obligations under the Act. Pleasingly many employers are moving beyond compliance. This will help accelerate the rate of change and improve gender equality for everyone at work.





Introduction

About WGEA

WGEA is an Australian Government statutory agency established by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (Cth) (the Act).

The Act charges WGEA with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. The Agency's vision is to achieve gender equality, where all people are fairly represented, equally valued and rewarded in the workplace. WGEA's purpose is to accelerate change to achieve gender equality in Australian workplaces by providing data backed insights, practical enabling support, tools and research and accessible pathways to leading practice.

WGEA's culture and values support the Agency to achieve its purpose now and into the future. WGEA is committed to the Australian Public Service values of being impartial, committed to service, accountable, respectful, ethical and displaying stewardship.

The Act requires 'relevant employers' with 100 or more employees to report to WGEA annually against 6 gender equality indicators (GEIs). These are:

- **GEI 1** – 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** – sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination.

Private sector employers have reported to WGEA since 2014. Commonwealth public sector employers first reported to WGEA in 2023 with 2022 data.

For private sector employers, the timeframe covered by the reporting is 1 April to 31 March, with reports due between 1 April and 31 May each year. For Commonwealth public sector employers, the reporting covers 1 January to 31 December, with reports due between 1 September and 31 October each year.



Purpose of the report

Subsection 12(2A) of the Act requires the Agency to submit a 2-yearly report to the Minister on progress achieved against the GEIs.

This report focuses on key measures from employer gender equality reports from 2022-23 and 2023-24 for private sector employers with comparisons to the 2021-22 and 2013-14 reporting periods, to show progress year on year and since employers began reporting to WGEA. Commonwealth public sector data for 2022 is also included, as a benchmark from which to measure progress and as a point of comparison with the private sector.

Detailed data in addition to the key measures included in this progress report is available on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#).

Assumptions

Any reference to 'employers' in this report means a relevant employer under the Act for reporting purposes. Standalone organisations, corporate groups and subsidiaries of corporate groups can all meet the threshold under the legislation. The terms 'employer' and 'relevant employer' are used interchangeably. Any reference to 'organisations' in this report also means relevant employers that submit reports to the Agency, sometimes on behalf of other entities within their corporate structures. The dates in the headings of the data figures in this report (e.g. 2022-23) refer to the relevant reporting period for that data.

The gender pay gaps referred to in this report are based on total remuneration of all employees, including superannuation, bonuses and other additional payments. WGEA's gender pay gap calculation includes remuneration of employees employed on a full-time, part-time and casual basis. Remuneration for part-time and casual employment is annualised to its full-time equivalent. Beginning in 2023-24, the gender pay gap calculation includes remuneration of CEOs, Heads of Business, and casual managers. Their inclusion is the result of legislative changes made in 2023 detailed in the reforms section of this report.

It is important to note the information reported to WGEA forms a living dataset. The data points evolve over time to reflect legislative reforms, improved understanding of gender equality and to aid clarity. As such some calculations may change between reporting years. WGEA has noted where this is the case in each table





Progress against the 6 GEIs

WGEA's world leading dataset

The information collected from employers through annual reporting contributes to WGEA's growing longitudinal dataset. Highly valued by employers, employees, advocates, policymakers and researchers world-wide, it includes information on the experience of more than 5.5 million employees in over 7,500 workplaces across Australia, making it possible to track progress on the 6 GEIs over time.

The 2023-24 private sector employer dataset is the largest on record. The inclusion of Commonwealth public sector added 338,951 employees in 116 workplaces to the national dataset and a valuable point of comparison for employers, policymakers and researchers.

FIGURE 1: Number of submission groups¹ or employers and employees²

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Number of Submission Groups / Employers	4,354 submission groups	4,795 submission groups	5,135 submission groups	7,414 employers	116 employers
Number of Employees	3,891,900	4,467,625	4,822,194	5,169,129	338,951

1 A submission group allows entities within the same corporate structure to report together if they are part of the same organisation and have similar workplace policies and strategies.

2 These numbers reflect the size of the dataset at the close of the reporting submission period. A small number of employers report after deadline however their information is not included in WGEA's research dataset for that year, or used for the production of aggregate national and industry data. Their information is, however, published on WGEA's Data Explorer, on the Agency's website.



Supporting legislative reforms to accelerate progress

Reforms to accelerate progress against the GEIs are a key feature of the timeframe of this report. WGEA has worked closely with Government to implement the reforms and directly with employers to support them through the changes.

In 2021 the government initiated a targeted review of the Act. This resulted in 10 recommendations to accelerate progress, enhance the legislation, and reduce the regulatory burden on employers.

In 2022 the *Anti-Discrimination and Human Rights Legislation Amendment (Respect at Work) Act 2022*, expanded the definition of relevant employer in the Act to include Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees.

The Government implemented several recommendations through the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023*, and the *Workplace Gender Equality (Matters in relation to Gender Equality Indicators) Instrument 2023* and *Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Standards) Instrument 2023*.

In March 2025, Parliament passed the *Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Act 2025* and the *Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Targets) Instrument 2025* implementing an additional recommendation for employers with 500 or more employees to set targets for improving gender equality in their workplace. This legislation will impact future employer action.

Key actions the Agency took to support and implement the legislative changes are detailed below.

Enabling Commonwealth public sector employer reporting

Commonwealth public sector relevant employers were required to report 2022 data to WGEA in 2023.

Ahead of mandatory reporting, WGEA invited relevant Commonwealth employers to voluntarily report their gender equality data. This allowed WGEA to refine the reporting systems and processes and to deliver a snapshot of the status of employer action against the 6 GEIs. 52 Commonwealth agencies (of a possible 112) reported voluntarily. Participants included 40 agencies who employed staff under the *Public Service Act 1999* (APS agencies) and 12 non-APS agencies. The *Commonwealth Public Sector Gender Equality Snapshot* details the insights from this voluntary reporting round.

In June 2024, WGEA published the results of the first Commonwealth Public Sector gender equality reporting. This included information for 116 employers against the 6 GEIs for 1 January – 31 December 2022. WGEA upgraded the Data Explorer to include the Commonwealth Public Sector employer data, developed briefings for Commonwealth public sector employers and a reporting guide tailored to the sector. Using feedback from the voluntary reporting period, WGEA worked with the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) to upload the relevant data it holds for 77 APS agencies to WGEA, thus minimising the duplication of effort.

In 2024, 123 Commonwealth public sector employers reported to WGEA. The results from this round of gender equality reporting will appear in the next Progress Report.



Collecting new data points and improving the reporting process

The 2023 legislative amendments required employers to report additional data to WGEA.

The new data points facilitate more accurate analysis of the drivers of workplace gender equality allowing employers to implement more effective actions to accelerate progress.

The most significant of these are:

- **Remuneration of CEOs, Heads of Business and casual managers:** The inclusion of this information in the gender pay gap calculation provides a more comprehensive picture of the gender pay gap in Australian workplaces, industries and as a nation because these roles are highly paid, and more likely to be occupied by men.
- **Age:** The inclusion of age in the analysis of the gender pay gap and workforce composition reveals gender differences that impact individual outcomes. Understanding these differences allows employers to more effectively target their actions.
- **Employee workplace location:** The inclusion of this information in the analysis of the gender pay gap and workforce composition provides more clarity on how industrial segregation influences the gender pay gap in states and territories. It can also provide insights into gender differences between city and regional areas, allowing employers to develop more effective action plans to address disadvantage.
- **GEI 6:** The creation of this GEI and the expanded data reported to WGEA shows how employers are taking action to prevent sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination. While harassment and discrimination impact all employees, national prevalence data shows it is more likely to impact women. WGEA asks employers to report information based on the standards outlined in the Australian Human Rights Commission's guidance for meeting the positive duty. Using this data, employers can identify areas for improvement in both their policies and their practices.
- **Targets for gender equality:** Employers were asked if they had set targets for gender equality, and, if so, to detail what targets they had set. This standalone question differs from the targets scheme articulated in the *Setting Gender Equality Targets Act* but provides a baseline for existing target setting by employers.

Private sector employers reported the additional data points in 2024 for the 2023–24 reporting period and Commonwealth public sector will report in 2025 for the 2024 reporting period.

Employer feedback to WGEA revealed the process of reporting is a powerful motivator for progress on workplace gender equality. The detailed questions in the reports prompt conversations in workplaces and can lead to employers improving their policies and strategies. To give employers more opportunities for this, and to assist employers to prepare to collect the new data, WGEA uploaded the new templates to the website in advance of the portal opening.

In addition, WGEA expanded assistance for employers, updated employer guides and communicated with employers through multiple channels to ensure they understood the requirements and were prepared to report the new data during the report submission period.



Creating and distributing reports for the governing body

WGEA provides two key reports to employers who complete gender equality reporting.

The Executive Summary sets out key results from an employer's submission against the GEIs, including the employer's gender pay gap and gender composition per pay quartile. The Industry Benchmark Report compares an employer's results against other employers of equivalent size within their industry.

The 2023 amendments to the Act set a new requirement for CEOs of relevant employers to provide these reports to the governing body. This measure further strengthens employer accountability for progress on gender equality. WGEA reviewed the reports, in consultation with Directors from the Australian Institute of Company Directors to enhance their readability and effectiveness and implemented the recommendations through a comprehensive re-write.

Publishing employer gender pay gaps

The *Closing the Gender Pay Gap Act* required WGEA to publish employer gender pay gaps as a lever to accelerate progress on the gender equality indicators.

To support employers, WGEA developed extensive guides to explain what the Agency would publish and when. These details were published early and often, through multiple channels to help employers to navigate the legislative changes and prepare for publication with effective action.

The Agency's media, social media and direct communications campaign in the lead up to publication tackled the conflation of the gender pay gap with equal pay because this common misconception prevents effective employer action to close the gap. The goal was to shift the public conversation away from equal pay for equal work to a greater awareness of the multiple complex drivers of the gender pay gap. The campaign also highlighted the steps employers can take to identify and take action on their unique drivers, particularly doing a gender pay gap analysis. Analysis of the campaign noted a shift in the public conversation about gender pay gaps towards more detailed discussion about the drivers of the gender pay gap and the importance of a gender pay gap analysis.

WGEA enhanced the Data Explorer to publish private sector employer median gender pay gaps and gender composition by remuneration quartile relating to the 2022-23 reporting period for the first time in February 2024. WGEA waited for the inclusion of CEO, Head of Business and Casual Manager remuneration to publish average gender pay gaps to ensure fair comparisons going forward. In February 2025, WGEA enhanced the Data Explorer again to publish average and median gender pay gaps for the 2023-24 reporting period. This release also included gender composition and average remuneration by quartile, as the gender pay gap is a combination of both pay and composition and understanding this relationship can lead to more effective action to reduce gender pay gaps.

For each release, employers have the option to upload an Employer Statement to the Data Explorer alongside their gender pay gap. These statements typically explain the actions employers are taking to progress gender equality in their workplaces. They also allow employers to explain the circumstances that are driving their gap. The Agency supported employers to develop these statements through tailored advice on doing a gender pay gap analysis to identify the drivers of the gap and evidence-informed actions. WGEA also developed a Gender Pay Gap Analysis Guide and a Gender Pay Gap Technical Guide to help employers to understand the calculations and the process of analysis.

WGEA published Commonwealth public sector median employer gender pay gaps and composition per pay quartile based on the 2023 reporting period for the first time in 2025. Average gender pay gaps and average remuneration per pay quartile will follow in 2026.



Implementing new Gender Equality Standards

The *Workplace Gender Equality (Minimum Standards) Instrument 2014* required employers with 500 or more employees to have a policy and/or strategy in place to support at least one GEI outlined in the Instrument (GEIs 1, 3, 4 and 6).

Given that almost all employers were compliant with the Minimum Standards, the review of the Act recommended increasing the requirement. The Minister for Women implemented this recommendation in the *Workplace Gender Equality (Gender Equality Standards) Instrument 2023*. The new standard requires employers with 500 or more employees to have a policy and/or strategy in place for each of the 6 GEIs. It came into effect for private sector employers for the 2023-24 reporting period and Commonwealth public sector for the 2024 reporting period.

Employers can comply with the Gender Equality Standard by having a standalone policy or strategy for each GEI or having a broader policy or strategy that covers more than one GEI area.

To assist employers to comply with the legislative changes and accelerate gender equality, WGEA produced policy guides for each GEI and communicated the changes through our website, subscriber newsletter and public communications channels.

Supporting employers to comply

To assist employers to comply with their legislative obligations, WGEA published a Compliance Strategy that outlines employer reporting obligations, including deadlines, and the process for obtaining an extension of time.

In 2024, WGEA emphasised the requirement to report on time to be compliant and receive a compliance certificate. WGEA also set out its response to employer non-compliance and made employers aware of the consequences of non-compliance.

WGEA worked directly with employers to assist them to comply and to understand the circumstances of non-compliance when identified. As a 'right touch' regulator, WGEA assesses and prioritises instances of non-compliance to determine an appropriate response that is in line with the reason for non-compliance and makes good use of WGEA's resources.

The Compliance Strategy groups employers' obligations into 4 categories:

- prepare and lodge annual reports with WGEA
- make certain information and reports available to employees, shareholders, members and employee organisations and to the governing body
- meet the Gender Equality Standards (for employers with 500 or more employees)
- not give false or misleading information and to cooperate with WGEA.

Employers responded positively to these measures, as evidenced by the increase in the number that completed their report in the required timeframe.



Supporting employers to drive change

The review of the Act characterised WGEA as a 'critical enabler' to support employers to progress gender equality and to implement the Review recommendations. To meet this goal, WGEA has improved support to employers and enhanced employer's access to their data.

Developing the ability to report as individual entities

To support employers to take action, WGEA enhanced analysis and reports to give corporate groups and their subsidiaries more detailed insights into their workplaces.

If some, or all, of a corporate group's subsidiaries have similar gender equality policies and strategies, these employers can report to WGEA as a 'submission group'. WGEA previously reported back to them, and publicly, in this manner. While submission group reporting reduces regulatory burden, employers who report in this way may lack information that allows them to understand an individual organisation's progress, the impact of each employer on the corporate group and the areas where progress can be made.

During the period of this report, WGEA aligned the outputs of gender equality reporting to each relevant employer within a corporate group. As a result, from 2023-24 reporting WGEA provided employer reports and public data including gender pay gaps for each relevant employer as well as the corporate group as a whole.

These changes give employers greater visibility over the areas of gender imbalance in their workforces, enabling them to act more effectively.

Building employer capability

WGEA's expert advice is enabling more employers to identify effective action.

WGEA established the Capacity Building team to provide direct support to employers, key industry groups and peak bodies. The team improves employer understanding of evidence-based actions on workplace gender equality and provides learning and development programs, through interactive workshops and masterclasses, and advisory services.

Masterclasses focus on specific topics, including how to conduct a gender pay gap analysis, gender equality action planning, and enhancing part-time work arrangements for gender equality. The direct advisory service offers 1:1 support where employers can discuss their specific workplace context and actions following a gender pay gap analysis.

The Agency also developed a suite of new education resources, including guides for conducting a gender pay gap analysis, developing policies for each GEI, ways governing bodies can progress gender equality and an Action Planning Playbook, which helps employers to select evidence-informed actions that can help them to address imbalances identified for each GEI.

Enhancing access to WGEA data and insights

WGEA's employer, national and industry data offers a unique opportunity to highlight avenues for progress on workplace gender equality through rich analysis and comparison.

During the timeframe of this report, WGEA upgraded the Agency's [Data Explorer](#) to improve access, enable comparisons between employers and industries and to facilitate deeper analysis of the data.

Each year, WGEA releases a *Gender Equality Scorecard* for the private sector and Commonwealth public sector to highlight key findings from their respective annual gender equality reports. The Agency has also released detailed reports of the insights from the publication of private sector employer gender pay gaps.



The Scorecards and Data Explorer are seen as a credible source of data and insights for employers, employees, media, researchers and government policymakers. They highlight where progress has been made and the areas of opportunity for future progress.

Upgrading recognition for leading employers

Competition and recognition are powerful motivators for action. WGEA's Employer of Choice for Gender Equality Citation recognises and encourages leading practice in workplace gender equality. Employers can apply for the citation and must demonstrate how they are meeting and committed to a set of evidence-based and rigorous criteria for progressing gender equality in their workplaces.

The Agency reviewed the citation program and in December 2024 released new standards to place emphasis on employers' achievement of, and commitment to, the key drivers of change on workplace gender equality. The new citation has two levels of employer recognition. (1) Employer of Choice for Gender Equality and (2) Employer Committed to Gender Equality.

The additional level – Employer Committed to Gender Equality – provides standalone recognition for employers taking decisive action on gender equality, and it can be used as a stepping stone to become an Employer of Choice for Gender Equality for leading practice employers.

Selecting and meeting gender equality targets

The new legislative requirement for designated relevant employers to select and meet (or improve against) gender equality targets introduces increased accountability for employers. Under the amended Act, employers with 500 or more direct employees will select targets from a menu of options detailed in the legislative instrument. To avoid increasing the employer reporting burden, WGEA worked with the government to ensure each of the targets align with data employers already report to WGEA.

As a result, employers are using a data-driven approach that is measurable and transparent for taking effective action and making progress on workplace gender equality.

WGEA will continue to work closely with employers to ensure they can confidently select targets and meet them.



Employer progress: What the reporting data shows

Gender Equality Standards

Most employers with 500 or more employees complied with the Minimum Standards as required in 2022-23. Under these requirements employers needed to have a policy in place for at least one GEI.

The high rate of compliance with the Minimum Standard was driven by the high percentage of employers with a policy and/or strategy relating to sex-based harassment and discrimination prevention (98.5% of all private sector employers). The proportion of employers with such a policy or strategy has remained constant since the standards first came into effect during the 2014-15 reporting period. This is likely because employers took steps to minimise the risk of liability under the *Sex Discrimination Act 1984* (Cth) and/or any other applicable federal, state and territory anti-discrimination legislation.

FIGURE 2: Performance against the Minimum Standards: proportion of employers with 500 or more employees with a policy and/or strategy (%)

Gender Equality Indicator (GEI)	Private sector 2014–15	Private sector 2021–22	Private sector 2022–23
GEI 1: Gender composition of the workforce	93.0	96.7	97.3
GEI 3: Equal remuneration between women and men	23.3	49.8	77.4
GEI 4: Flexible working arrangements and support for employees with family and caring responsibilities	68.9	77.5	89.7
GEI 6: Sex-based harassment and discrimination	99.4	99.3	99.3

The new Gender Equality Standards that took effect from 2023-24 required employers with 500 or more employees to have a policy or strategy for each of the GEIs to be compliant with the legislation. In total, 40.5% of employers met the standards by having a policy or strategy against each of the 6 GEIs.

FIGURE 3: Performance against the Gender Equality Standards: proportion of employers with 500 or more employees with a policy and/or strategy (%)*

Gender Equality Indicator (GEI)	Private sector 2023–24
GEI 1: Gender composition of the workforce	97.7
GEI 2: Gender composition of governing bodies	69.6
GEI 3: Equal remuneration between women and men	80.1
GEI 4: Flexible working arrangements	92.8
GEI 4: Support for employees with family or caring responsibilities	84.9
GEI 5: Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace	60.2
GEI 6: Sex-based harassment and discrimination	99.4

* Note: In 2023-24 the standard was measured against flexible working arrangements and support for employees with family or caring responsibilities policies separately for the first time.

Importantly, the proportion of employers with a policy or strategy for each of the GEIs outlined in the Standards has increased both year-on-year and since reporting began.



The largest rises can be seen in GEI3 and GEI4. Over the past decade the proportion of employers with 500 or more employees with a policy for GEI3 has more than tripled as more employers understand the gender pay gap and the need to take action to address it. The proportion of employers with a specific policy to support employers with family or caring responsibilities has increased from 78.3% in 2022-23 to 84.9% in 2023-24 and the proportion with a policy on flexible working arrangements from 89.7% to 92.8 over the same period.

The proportion of employers that do not have a policy or strategy for GEI 2 and GEI 5, the indicators recently added to the standards, is noticeably lower. However, the proportion with a policy for GEI5: Consultation with employees has increased from 57.4% in 2022-23 to 60.2% in 2023-24.

Employers who do not yet have a policy or strategy for all 6 GEIs have two reporting periods to meet the requirements. WGEA communicated with these employers providing education for them to understand and meet the new requirements.

Employer progress by GEI

This section of the report focuses on progress for private sector employers with 100 or more employees. Information from the first year of Commonwealth public sector reporting is included as a baseline from which to measure future progress.

The 2023 legislative reforms came into effect for private sector employers for the 2023-24 reporting period. As such, reporting of some data points changed between 2022-23 and 2023-24. Such changes are noted in the relevant figures, as are any impacts on the data related to the streamlining of the reporting process due to reform measures. The reforms came into effect for the Commonwealth public sector in the 2023 reporting period, which is not included in this report.

GEI 1 – Gender composition of the workforce

The proportion of women and men in the private sector workforce is roughly equal. Women account for 51% of the workforce and men account for 49%. This has remained stable over the past two reporting periods. However, the proportion of women in the workforce has increased marginally, by 2.6 percentage points since 2013-14, meaning in the past decade the workforce has shifted from slightly more men to slightly more women.

WGEA's first year of Commonwealth public sector reporting, shows slightly more men than women are employed in the Commonwealth public sector.

Under the Act, employers are only required to provide data on women and men. In 2021, WGEA allowed employers to voluntarily report employee gender as non-binary if an employee has disclosed that they identify as non-binary. The proportion of non-binary employees in WGEA's dataset increased from 0.1% in 2021-22 to 0.3% in 2023-24.³

FIGURE 4: Gender composition of the workforce (%)

Gender	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Women	48.5	50.9	51.1	51.1	43.5
Men	51.5	48.9	48.7	48.7	56.3
Non-binary	–	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.2

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

³ Given the numbers reported remain small and reporting is voluntary, information about non-binary employees has not been included in this report.



Although the gender composition of the private sector workforce is roughly equal, there is, nevertheless, an entrenched gender imbalance in more specific areas of workforce composition. Gender segregation by employment status, for example, has remained generally unchanged since 2013-14, with women more likely to be employed on a part-time or casual basis and less likely to be employed full-time, compared to men.

Both women and men are more likely to work full-time in the Commonwealth public sector than in the private sector.

FIGURE 5: Proportion of employees by employment status and gender (%)

Employment status	Gender	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Full-time	Women	20.6	21.5	21.8	20.1	31.9
	Men	37.0	33.0	32.7	29.7	43.0
Part-time	Women	15.3	15.7	15.2	16.7	7.4
	Men	5.0	5.4	5.3	6.1	1.9
Casual	Women	12.6	13.8	14.1	15.6	4.2
	Men	9.4	10.7	10.9	11.8	11.5
Total Workforce		99.9	100.1	100	100	99.9

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

Gender segregation of industries is a key driver of the gender pay gap and a significant feature of the Australian labour force. Nearly half the workforce is employed in an industry dominated by one gender. While men-dominated industries have slowly shifted towards gender balanced over the past decade, women-dominated industries show entrenched segregation.

FIGURE 5: Proportion of the workforce in women-dominated, men-dominated and gender-balanced industries (%)

Industry type	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24
Women-dominated	23	26	26	27
Gender-balanced	41	48	50	49
Men-dominated	35	26	24	24

At individual industry level, some sectors are making progress faster than others. Construction and Mining have seen the largest improvements towards balance.



FIGURE 6: Proportion of women and men in each industry, by industry type (%)

Industry	Private sector 2013–14		Private sector 2021–22		Private sector 2022–23		Private sector 2023–24	
	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (%)	Men (%)
Education & Training	63	38	65	35	65	35	66	34
Health Care & Social Assistance	81	20	79	21	78	21	78	22
Total (Women-dominated)	73	27	74	26	73	27	73	27
Accommodation & Food Services	51	49	53	47	52	48	52	48
Administrative & Support Services	47	53	48	52	48	52	47	53
Arts & Recreation Services	51	49	50	50	52	48	52	48
Financial & Insurance Services	56	44	53	47	52	48	53	47
Information Media & Telecommunications	40	60	39	61	40	59	41	59
Other services	49	51	55	45	55	45	55	45
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	39	61	43	57	44	56	43	57
Rental, Hiring & Real Estate Services	44	56	41	59	43	57	40	60
Retail Trade	59	41	57	43	56	43	56	44
Total (Gender-balanced)	54	46	51	49	51	49	51	49
Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing	35	65	34	66	35	65	35	65
Construction	16	84	24	76	26	74	21	79
Electricity, Gas, Water & Waste Services	25	75	26	74	26	74	26	74
Manufacturing	27	73	27	73	28	72	27	73
Mining	16	84	20	80	22	78	22	78
Public Administration & Safety	22	79	24	76	30	70	26	74
Transport, Postal & Warehousing	26	74	25	75	26	74	26	74
Wholesale Trade	36	64	37	63	36	64	38	62
Total (Men-dominated)	27	73	28	72	28	72	27	73
TOTAL (All Industries)	49	52	51	49	51	49	51	49

Note: Figures may not add to 100% due to rounding.

More women have progressed to leadership positions in the private sector since reporting to WGEA began, with notable increases in the number of women holding key management personnel and general manager roles. However, progress has slowed in the recent two reporting periods and women's representation in management in the private sector declines with each higher level of seniority.

In contrast, all management positions in the Commonwealth public sector are gender-balanced, and all manager roles made up by 48% women and 52% men. Across all manager categories, women's representation is proportional to their representation in the total workforce.



Occupational gender segregation is often driven by cultural gender stereotypes and norms. It is a challenge to workplace gender equality, as women often work in lower paid occupations. Early progress to shift these stereotypes in the private sector saw increasing numbers of women moving into men-dominated roles. Over the past two reporting periods progress to increase the proportion of women in men-dominated roles is slow. Key challenges remain in increasing the number of men in women-dominated roles. Future requirements for large employers to select and achieve or improve against gender equality targets should assist with this change.

Proportionally more men work in clerical and administrative roles in the Commonwealth public sector than in the private sector. And more women work as machinery operators and drivers in the Commonwealth Public Sector than in the private sector. Understanding these differences and the employer actions that drove them, could provide an evidence base for progress in the private sector.

FIGURE 7: Proportion of women in manager and non-manager occupations (%)

Occupation	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
CEO	17.0*	22.3	22.0	21.9	–
HOB	–	28.7	30.2	29.0	–
Key management personnel	26.0	35.0	36.6	37.5	45.6
Other executives/general managers	28.0	34.7	36.0	36.8	44.6
Senior managers	32.0	38.7	39.2	39.7	46.5
Other managers	40.0	43.5	44.4	44.4	48.2
Total – all manager positions	36.0	41.0	42.0	42.2	47.6
Clerical and administrative	76.0	72.4	72.4	72.5	59.6
Community and personal service	74.0	71.0	71.0	70.9	20.9
Sales	60.0	59.4	58.9	58.7	76.8
Professionals	52.0	54.4	54.8	55.1	41.2
Labourers	28.0	36.8	37.9	38.5	21.7
Technicians and trade	12.0	16.1	18.2	18.4	14.3
Machinery operators and drivers	11.0	14.3	15.6	16.2	27.4
Total – all non-managers	50.0	52.2	52.3	52.4	42.5

Note: The 2013-14 private sector data on CEO also includes HOBs. CEOs and HOBs were reported as separate occupations beginning in 2020-21. The Commonwealth public sector did not report data on the CEO or Heads of Business in 2022. This will come into effect in the 2024 reporting period. In the Commonwealth public sector, Community and Personal Service roles include policing, protective services, defence force personnel and health and welfare support workers, carers, and hospitality workers.



The proportion of women appointed, promoted and resigned, for managers and non-managers alike, has remained stable and roughly equal to that of men over the period of this report. Since 2021-22, the largest shifts in the private sector are women being internally appointed and promoted.

Employee movements in the Commonwealth public sector are generally gender-balanced. However, a higher proportion of women managers are externally appointed and resign when compared to the private sector (and when compared to the percentage of women overall in the public sector), and there are fewer promotions for women non-managers (compared to the private sector and to the percentage of women overall).

FIGURE 8: Proportion of women for appointments, promotions and resignations (%)

Employee Movements	Roles	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Appointments - all	Manager	45	46	47	51
Appointments - all	Non-manager	53	53	54	51
Appointments - external	Manager	43	44	45	52
Appointments - external	Non-manager	54	52	53	52
Appointments - internal	Manager	46	49	50	48
Appointments - internal	Non-manager	55	54	56	46
Promotions	Manager	46	47	49	45
Promotions	Non-manager	48	47	51	40
Resignations	Manager	43	45	46	50
Resignations	Non-manager	54	53	54	49

Employers are taking action that will help shift entrenched gender segregation in future.

The proportion of private sector employers with a policy or strategy in place to support gender equality overall has increased 24 pp since 2013-14. Half this increase – 12 pp – was in the past two reporting periods. This may be attributed to the advent of the Gender Equality Standards requiring employers with 500 or more employees to have such a policy or strategy in addition to requirements for WGEA to publish employer gender pay gaps – which are the result of both composition and remuneration.

78% of all Commonwealth public sector employers have an overall policy or strategy for gender equality, on par with the private sector in 2022-23.

While more employers now have a policy, WGEA's data shows an opportunity for employers to develop policy inclusions that, based on their data and evidence, are likely to create the most progress. For example, most employers now include recruitment in their workforce composition policy, but fewer include retention, succession planning or talent identification. WGEA will support employers to develop policies through education guides and direct support.



FIGURE 9: Proportion of employers with a policy and/or strategy to support gender equality (%)

Policy or strategy	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Recruitment	73	87	88	95	85
Training and development	64	85	85	81	76
Performance management processes	61	85	86	79	74
Promotions	56	73	73	70	70
Retention	48	69	70	69	65
Succession planning	44	71	72	66	41
Talent identification/identification of high potentials	47	72	73	65	47
Gender and other aspects of diversity	–	–	–	65	–
Key performance indicators for managers relating to gender equality	18	38	38	32	37
Gender equality policy or strategy overall	66	78	79	90	78

Note: The question structure changed in 2023-24, asking what was included in employers' policies or strategies for gender equality. Previously, employers reported whether they had standalone policies or strategies on areas such as recruitment, promotion, etc. Private sector employers were first asked about a policy/strategy on gender and other aspects of diversity in 2023-24. The Commonwealth public sector was first asked for the 2023 reporting period.

Specific, measurable and visible targets are known mechanisms to drive business outcomes and performance. Change is driven by both the analysis and engagement to select targets and the enhanced transparency that comes with planning how to meet them and measuring progress. Evidence shows target setting combined with realistic and time-bound actions has potential to accelerate the rate at which employers make progress against key gender equality metrics.

In the 2023-24 reporting period, private sector employers were asked about target setting for the first time. This was not a requirement for the Commonwealth public sector until 2023 reporting.

45% of private sector employers with 100 or more employees and 56% of employers with 500 or more employees already set targets for gender equality.

Most of the employers set targets to increase the number of women in management. This is a key area for progressing workplace gender equality and addressing the gender pay gap, given women's underrepresentation in leadership positions.

Fewer employers set targets related to men. Just 9% set a target to increase the number of men in women-dominated roles, and as seen earlier, this is a stubborn area of inequality in workforce gender composition. 11% of employers had a target to increase the number of men taking parental leave. Women undertaking more of the care remains a key challenge to their career progression and to men's ability to spend more time engaging with their family, which supports their wellbeing.



FIGURE 10: Proportion of employers setting targets to address gender equality in the workplace (%)

Gender equality target	Private sector 2023-24
Increase the number of women in management positions	31
Reduce the gender pay gap	27
Increase the number of women in male-dominated roles	23
Increase the number of men taking parental leave	11
Increase the number of men in female-dominated roles	9
Increase the number of men using flexible work arrangements	9
Other	6

Progress summary

Progress to improve industrial and occupational gender segregation has been slow. But employers are taking important steps that will help drive change in future years. More have implemented a specific policy for workforce composition, and many are setting targets to drive change. Key actions to reduce the gender pay gap, in response to publication are also likely to drive change. Incoming requirements for employers with 500 or more employees to select and achieve or improve against gender equality targets will also have a positive impact.



GEI 2 – Gender composition of governing bodies

Over the past decade, the proportion of women with a seat on a private sector governing body has increased, but progress is slow year-on-year. In contrast, the Commonwealth public sector has achieved gender-balance on boards overall and has more than double the proportion of women Chairs.

FIGURE 11: Women's representation on governing bodies (%)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Members	24	34	34	35	51
Chairs	12	18	19	20	42
Total (Members and Chairs)	–	31	31	32	50

At the individual board level, 1 in 4 private sector boards are now gender-balanced as opposed to one in 10 in 2014–15. However, most boards are still men-dominated and 26% of boards still have no women at the decision-making table, despite the proportion of all-men boards decreasing by 11pp.

In the Commonwealth public sector, more than half of governing bodies are gender-balanced, with the proportion of women-dominated and men-dominated governing bodies close to equal.

FIGURE 12: Representation and gender balance of governing bodies (%)

	Private sector 2014-15	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Governing bodies with no men	1	1	1	1	4
Women-dominated governing bodies	5	7	6	6	17
Gender-balanced governing bodies	11	20	25	27	55
Men-dominated governing bodies	46	50	42	40	22
Governing bodies with no women	37	22	26	26	2

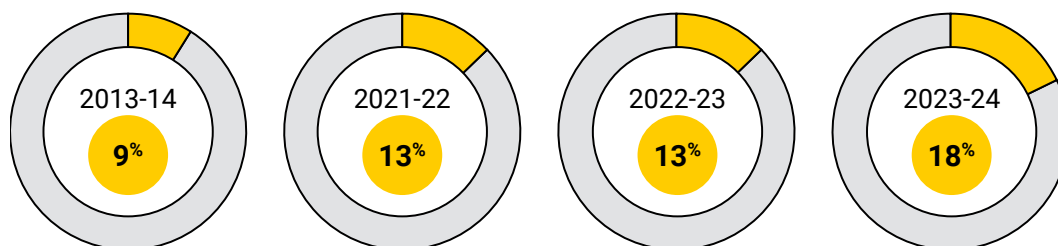
The achievement of gender balance on Commonwealth public sector governing bodies is likely due to concentrated efforts to ensure women are on boards through target setting and a commitment to reporting on progress and meeting those targets.⁴

⁴ Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet (2024). Gender Balance on Australian Government Boards. Available: <https://www.pmc.gov.au/office-women/womens-leadership/gender-balance-australian-government-boards>.



Australian Public Sector employers have a government-wide target to achieve 50% representation of women on government boards. The success of APS targets should be an example for improving gender-balance on private sector boards. In the private sector ASX employers have focused on increasing women's representation on boards to 30% and WGEA's data shows the percentage of private sector employers with a target to increase the representation of women on boards is slowly increasing.

FIGURE 13: Private sector employers with a target to increase women's representation on boards (%)



This points to the awareness among private sector employers of the importance of gender-balanced governing bodies, cultivated through setting targets. The introduction of target setting legislation for employers with 500 or more employees is likely to be a helpful lever to improve gender-balance on private sector boards in future.

Fewer than half (43%) of private sector employers with 100 or more employees have a policy or strategy to support gender equality in the composition of their governing body in 2023-24. However, the proportion of private sector employers that consider gender equality in the selection of governing body members continues to increase, showing a growing awareness of the need for diversity on boards.

Many Commonwealth public sector employers do not have control over board selection and as already noted, the APS has sector wide policies to support gender equality in governing body composition. It is likely for this reason that few Commonwealth public sector employers have a policy or strategy to support gender equality in their governing body composition.

In 2023-24, private sector employers reported whether they had restrictions for the tenure of a Chair or Member on the governing body for the first time, with 26% reporting the use of term limits. This question was asked of the Commonwealth public sector for the first time in the 2023 reporting period.



FIGURE 14: Governing body policy and strategy inclusions (% of employers)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24*	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Employer has a policy	–	–	29	43	12
Selection of governing body members	38	55	55	–	37
Broad advertisement of governing body positions	–	–	–	21	–
Gender diversity on candidate shortlists	–	–	–	39	–
Succession planning	–	–	–	43	–
Gender and other aspects of diversity	–	–	–	53	–

Note: The first row is the proportion of all employers, the information in subsequent rows is the proportion of employers with a policy or strategy. However, private sector employers were asked about the selection of governing body members as a standalone policy or strategy in 2013-14, 2021-22 and 2022-23, as were Commonwealth public sector employers in 2022. This was asked as an inclusion in an overall governing body policy or strategy in 2023-24.

Progress summary

The success of target setting to improve gender-balance on Commonwealth public sector boards is a positive sign for future progress in the private sector as employers begin to select targets to achieve from 2026. Key areas for improvement and action include raising the proportion of woman Chairs, implementing term limits and deepening the policy inclusions and actions for board membership.



GEI 3 – Equal remuneration between women and men

The gender pay gap is a measure of how women and men are valued in the workforce. Expressed as a percentage or a dollar figure, it is the difference in average or median earnings between women and men. The gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay, which refers to women and men being paid the same for work of equal or comparable value. Equal pay for equal work is a legal requirement in Australia.

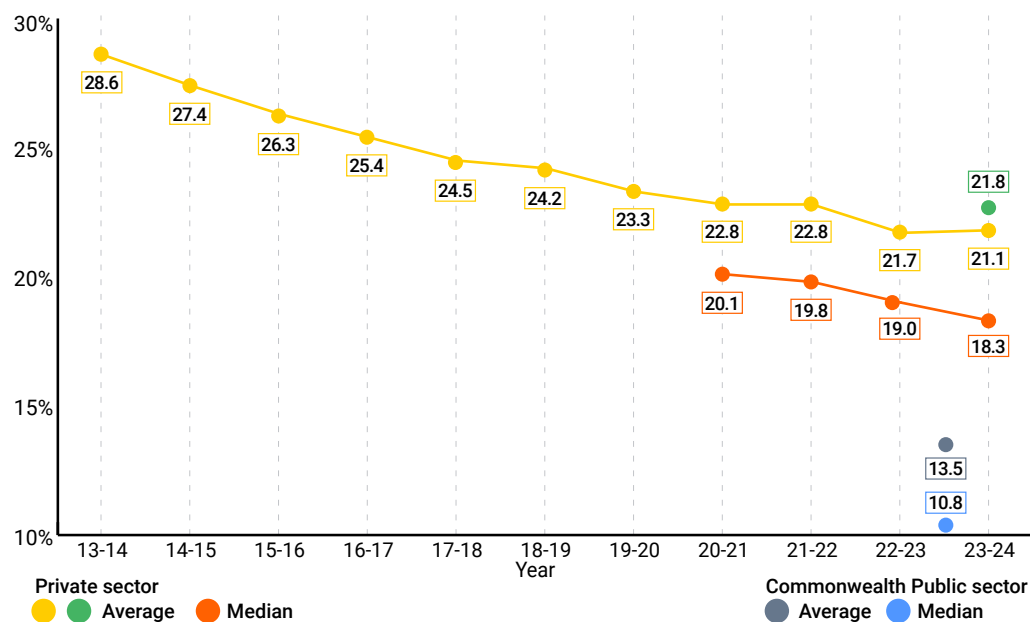
The causes of the gender pay gap are complex and include women's underrepresentation in senior leadership, gender segregation across industries and occupations, women's disproportionate share of unpaid caring and domestic work, as well as gender discrimination and bias.

After a period of stalling momentum, the private sector gender pay gap is falling once again and now stands at 21.8%. This figure includes the new remuneration and composition data from CEO's, Heads of Business and Casual Managers. When these high-earners are excluded to allow for a year-for-year comparison, the gender pay gap reduces to 21.1% for 2023-24. This is a 0.6pp decline from the previous year.

The median total remuneration gender pay gap, which is not significantly impacted by the inclusion of CEO remuneration reduced 1.5pp over the period of this report and now stands at 18.3pp.

The Commonwealth public sector average total remuneration gender pay gap is lower than the private sector at 13.5% in favour of men. This reflects the fact that the Commonwealth public sector has more gender-balance overall and particularly in management positions.

FIGURE 15: Australia's total remuneration gender pay gap over time, private and Commonwealth public sectors



Note: WGEA calculated two gender pay gap results for 2023–24, one with CEO, HOB and Casual Manager remuneration included (green dot) and one with it excluded, which is comparable to previous years (yellow line).

Following legislative reforms, WGEA was enabled to collect data on employee age and primary workplace location. These data points, reflected for the first time in the 2023-24 reporting period, provide insights into how age and location can influence workplace outcomes for women and men. The Commonwealth public sector reported on this for the first time in the 2023 period and outside the timeframe for this report.

In the private sector, a gender pay gap exists at every age, except for the youngest cohort. The gender pay gap also increases with age until age 60-64. The data also shows women's average total remuneration peaks at age 45-49 while men's average total remuneration peaks at age 50-54.

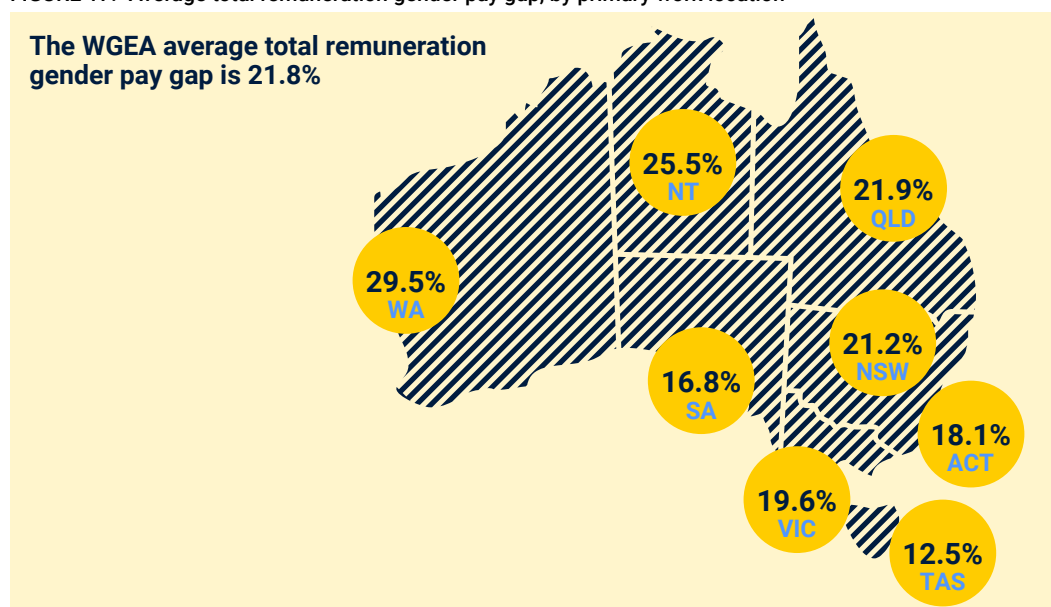


FIGURE 16: Average total remuneration gender pay gaps, by age

Age (Years)	Employees		Proportion of the workforce		Average total remuneration		Gender pay gap	
	Women (No. of)	Men (No. of)	Women (%)	Men (%)	Women (\$)	Men (\$)	(\$)	(%)
15–19	125,484	111,815	53	47	44,900	44,524	-376	-0.8
20–24	293,579	253,244	54	46	72,995	74,935	1,940	2.6
25–29	340,348	304,469	53	47	88,968	95,620	6,652	7.0
30–34	343,381	319,323	52	48	102,395	117,579	15,184	12.9
35–39	323,025	314,182	51	49	113,774	140,117	26,343	18.8
40–44	291,759	299,254	49	51	120,836	156,937	36,101	23.0
45–49	244,347	246,220	50	50	123,245	167,334	44,089	26.3
50–54	236,975	229,768	51	49	119,972	170,167	50,195	29.5
55–59	193,979	188,396	51	49	110,078	163,251	53,173	32.6
60–64	147,205	145,825	50	50	102,026	148,292	46,266	31.2
65+	99,166	101,672	49	51	97,841	133,447	35,606	26.7

Every state and territory has a gender pay gap in favour of men. The data partially reflects the impact of industrial segregation on the gender pay gap. For example, Mining and Healthcare are dominant industries in Western Australia. Mining is a men-dominated industry with a high average remuneration and Healthcare is a women-dominated industry with a lower average remuneration.

FIGURE 17: Average total remuneration gender pay gap, by primary work location



Over the past decade the gender pay gap has reduced in every industry and 3 industries have seen double-digit reductions. Progress in the period of this report has been slower. Importantly this data reflects the period before WGEA began to publish employer gender pay gaps. As such it shows the baseline of employer gender pay gaps before the legislative reforms and includes all employees in the WGEA dataset.

FIGURE 18: Average total remuneration gender pay gap by ANZSIC division⁵

Industry	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24*	Change (in pp) between 2021-22 and 2023-24	Change (in pp) between 2013-14 and 2023-24
Accommodation and Food Services	19.1	6.9	6.4	5.0	-1.9	-14.1
Administrative and Support Services	21.0	11.8	13.0	13.9	2.1	-7.1
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	24.0	18.8	16.9	18.6	-0.2	-5.4
Arts and Recreation Services	18.7	13.7	12.0	13.3	-0.4	-5.4
Construction	28.1	29.2	28.3	24.6	-4.6	-3.5
Education and Training	12.2	10.5	7.5	7.8	-2.7	-4.4
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	18.9	15.9	14.8	15.0	-0.9	-3.9
Financial and Insurance Services	38.8	28.6	26.2	27.3	-1.3	-11.5
Health Care and Social Assistance	13.6	13.5	13.0	12.6	-0.9	-1.0
Information Media and Telecommunications	27.3	20.6	19.5	17.2	-3.4	-10.1
Manufacturing	17.1	12.3	12.7	13.5	1.2	-3.6
Mining	17.4	14.4	12.7	12.4	-2.0	-5.0
Other Services	20.0	18.0	16.0	18.6	0.6	-1.4
Public Administration and Safety	10.3	3.5	15.9	4.8	1.3	-5.5
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	29.8	23.5	22.8	22.6	-0.9	-7.2
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	25.6	27.6	23.1	23.1	-4.5	-2.5
Retail Trade	17.2	13.3	13.7	12.8	-0.5	-4.4
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	23.3	19.3	20.0	18.7	-0.6	-4.6
Wholesale Trade	17.5	15.7	14.2	15.7	0.0	-1.8
Overall	28.6	22.8	21.7	21.8	-1.0	-6.8

Women-dominated Gender-balanced Men-dominated

* Note: 2023–24 includes CEO, HOB and casual manager remuneration

⁵ The ANZSIC system is the national framework for classifying business entities based on their primary business activity for use in the compilation and analysis of industry statistics in Australia and New Zealand. Expressed as a four digit code, the ANZSIC framework is used to classify and benchmark employer data against their relevant industry, subdivision, group, and class.



In general, gender pay gaps increase as the level of seniority increases and the proportion of women declines. While the gender pay gap is in favour of men at all occupational levels, the size of these gaps has reduced over the past two years with the largest improvements in the labourer's occupation.

The inclusion of CEO and Head of Business remuneration as a result of the legislative reforms offered new insights into the gender pay gap in the highest roles. Women CEOs earn on average 25% less than men.

Occupational level gender pay gaps are smaller in the Commonwealth public sector. Most still favour men, with one exception - key management personnel level where the gender pay gap is 0.3% in favour of women.

FIGURE 19: Average total remuneration gender pay gap by occupation

Occupation	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
CEO	–	–	–	25.0	–
Heads of Business	–	–	–	23.4	–
Key management personnel	29.9	24.4	22.1	21.2	-0.3
Other executives/general managers	28.3	21.6	19.6	18.2	8.9
Senior managers	23.1	17.7	17.4	16.5	6.5
Other managers	23.9	19.4	19.0	18.5	7.2
TOTAL (All managers)	29.7	23.0	22.2	22.8	7.7
Clerical and administrative	8.4	8.0	7.5	7.7	0.8
Community and personal service	18.0	5.1	4.3	4.5	10.9
Labourers	24.5	14.9	13.5	12.3	7.3
Machinery operators and drivers	16.8	13.5	13.0	13.1	16.5
Professionals	22.2	18.5	18.1	18.5	18.8
Sales workers	17.3	14.3	14.1	12.5	15.2
Technicians and trade	32.1	27.6	28.7	29.6	10.9
TOTAL (All non-managers)	24.2	18.9	18.1	17.8	18.1

Note: Remuneration for CEO and Head of Business was first reported to WGEA in the 2023-24 reporting period for private sector employers. Commonwealth public sector employers will report this information for the first time when they submit 2024 gender equality reports in 2025.

More private sector employers now have a gender pay gap in the neutral range (within and including +/-5%). Commonwealth public sector employers are more likely to have achieved this goal.



FIGURE 20: Distribution of employer average total remuneration gender pay gaps (% of employers)

Private sector 2021-22



Private sector 2022-23



Private sector 2023-24



Commonwealth Public Sector 2022



In favour of women (<-5%) Neutral (within and including -5 and +5%) In favour of men (>+5%)

The mid-point marks the halfway point of employer gender pay gaps within a group. That means 50% of employers will have a gender pay gap lower than this point, and 50% of employers will have a gender pay gap higher than this point.

The midpoint of Commonwealth public sector total remuneration median gender pay gaps is 6.9%.

The mid-point of the average total remuneration employer gender pay gaps in the private sector, reported for the first time in 2023-24, is 12.1%. In future years, this will be an important benchmark for judging progress to reduce the gender pay gap.

FIGURE 21: Employer gender pay gap mid-point (total remuneration) (%)

	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth Public Sector 2022
Median	9.1	8.9	6.9
Average	–	12.1	–

Note: WGEA did not report mid-point average gender pay gaps for the private sector 2022-23 and Commonwealth public sector 2022 reporting periods.

Between 2022-23 and 2023-24 the midpoint of the median total remuneration employer gender pay gaps in the private sector reduced from 9.1% to 8.9%. Men-dominated industries saw the greatest progress with a 1.3pp decline overall compared to a 0.9pp decrease for gender-balanced industries and 0.5pp for women dominated industries.

With the publication of employer gender pay gaps, WGEA can also now report on progress to reduce the gender pay gap at the employer level. Between 2022-23 and 2023-24, 56% of private sector employers reduced their average total remuneration gender pay gap and a majority of employers reduced their gender pay gap in every industry.



FIGURE 22: Employer gender pay gap mid-point (total remuneration) by ANZSIC division

Industry	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Change in median mid- point (pp)	Private sector 2023-24	Employers with an improved average GPG (%)
	Median GPG (%)	Median GPG (%)		Average GPG (%)	
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	7.7	8.5	+0.8	12.9	63
Arts and Recreation Services	2.0	2.8	+0.8	7.2	63
Financial and Insurance Services	22.3	22.2	-0.1	22.2	62
Information Media and Telecommunications	12.9	10.6	-2.3	12.1	62
Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services	23.4	20.4	-3.0	17.1	61
Public Administration and Safety	4.3	0.7	-3.6	1.9	60
Accommodation and Food Services	1.6	1.6	0	7.2	59
Other Services	5.9	8.4	+2.5	10.6	59
Mining	21.5	19.9	-1.6	19.8	57
Professional, Scientific and Technical Services	16.1	15.4	-0.7	17.3	57
Health Care and Social Assistance	1.5	1.1	-0.4	3.7	56
Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services	18.5	16.2	-2.3	21.2	56
Retail Trade	5.1	3.7	-1.4	10.6	56
Wholesale Trade	14.0	11.6	-2.4	16.4	56
Administrative and Support Services	4.4	4.3	-0.1	7.2	55
Construction	25.8	26.3	+0.5	25.3	54
Education and Training	6.6	6.0	-0.6	7.6	54
Manufacturing	11.7	11.1	-0.6	14.2	54
Transport, Postal and Warehousing	12.0	11.9	-0.1	13.6	51
Total	9.1	8.9	-0.2	12.1	56

Women-dominated
 Gender-balanced
 Men-dominated

The number of employers with a policy or strategy for GEI 3 has increased significantly in the past decade. Employers are also more likely to have specific inclusions in their policy to address pay equity. Commonwealth public sector employers are less likely to have a policy or strategy on remuneration in general. Of those that do, fewer also have specific pay equity objectives.



FIGURE 23: Proportion of employers with a policy or strategy for remuneration and specific inclusions (%)

Policy or strategy	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Remuneration policy or strategy	49	67	70	71	46
Pay equity objectives in remuneration policy/strategy	18	59	61	–	51
Ensure no gender bias occurs at any point in the remuneration review process	–	83	85	86	70
Implement and/or maintain a transparent and rigorous performance assessment process	–	58	61	62	78
Achieve gender pay equity	–	63	64	61	41
Close the gender pay gap	–	–	–	45	–
To be transparent about pay scales and/or salary bands	–	38	41	39	82
Ensure managers are held accountable for pay equity outcomes	–	35	39	38	11

Note: The question structure changed for private sector employers in 2023-24 and they reported directly on equal remuneration policies or strategies. Prior to that, employers were asked if they had a policy or strategy for remuneration and if so, did it have specific pay equity objectives. The following rows are the proportion of employers that have specific policy inclusions if they have a policy or strategy with pay equity objectives (2021-22 and 2022-23 and 2022 for Commonwealth public sector employers) or a policy or strategy on equal remuneration (2023-24). WGEA did not ask employers about other policy or strategy inclusions in the 2013-14 reporting period.

Record numbers of employers are conducting a gender pay gap analysis. The number of employers taking action as a result of their analysis has also hit a high at 75%. These recent increases point to the anticipation of publishing employer gender pay gaps along with WGEA's consistent messaging that the first step to address the gender pay gap is to conduct a gender pay gap analysis.

FIGURE 24: Proportion of employers that conducted a gender pay gap analysis and took action on the result (%)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Conducted a gender pay gap analysis	24	54	55	68	64
Proportion of those that took action on the results	46	58	60	75	64

Private sector employers are diversifying the types of actions they take beyond addressing instances of unequal pay and seeking to improve key moments for the introduction of inequality such as decision-making on remuneration. They are also building in more accountability for their results by reporting pay equity metrics to their leadership (both the executive and governing body). The broad use of award wages in the Commonwealth public sector is the likely cause for lower number of employers reviewing the remuneration decision-making process. However, it should be noted that gender pay gaps can, and do still occur where an employer uses award wages.



Broadening the type of analysis completed could further improve progress on this GEI. In 2023-24, most private sector employers (77%) conducted a like-for-like gender pay gap analysis. This was followed by 62% of employers conducting an organisation-wide analysis and 52% conducting a by-level analysis. An organisation-wide analysis, the most comprehensive type, would give employers greater understanding of their data and the key areas driving their gender pay gap. Armed with this more detailed information they can then choose effective actions to reduce their gap.

Progress summary

Progress to achieve equal remuneration between women and men is happening with more than 50% of employers reducing their gender pay gaps and record numbers conducting a gender pay gap analysis and taking action on the results. Publishing employer gender pay gaps is an important catalyst. The impact of these actions is likely to be seen in WGEA's gender pay gap data in future reporting years.

Progress to reduce the gender pay gap is likely to accelerate as employers enhance their understanding of the gender pay gap through undertaking more comprehensive gender pay gap analysis processes, selecting targets to improve areas of imbalance and developing an action plan to drive progress. The introduction of age and location data can enable employers and policymakers to more effectively pinpoint areas of imbalance so they can target their actions in future.



GEI 4 – Flexible working arrangements

The proportion of private sector employers with formal policies or strategies for flexible working arrangements has continued to rise post COVID-19 pandemic. At the start of WGEA reporting only 58% of private sector employers had a flexible working arrangements policy, this has now increased to 87%.

Formal arrangements are more common in the Commonwealth public sector where 97% of employers have formal policies or strategies in place for flexible working arrangements. This is a likely contributor to the higher rates of full-time employment in the sector seen in GEI 1.

While the proportion of employers with different policy inclusions has tended to fluctuate, the data suggests the gains in workplace flexibility have become integral to workplace policy and practice. This is significant, since the normalisation of flexible working arrangements can reduce the stigma and career penalty often experienced by those who work flexibly, more often women. This also provides men more time and opportunity to engage in unpaid activities, including caring responsibilities.

FIGURE 25: Proportion of employers with a flexible working arrangements policy or strategy

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Policy or strategy for flexible working arrangements	58	82	84	87	97

Note: More detail about the inclusions in employer policies or strategies for flexible work is available on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#).

Private sector employers have dramatically broadened their flexible working options for employees. In addition to almost comprehensive offering of working from home, there have also been major increases in the proportion of employers offering time-in-lieu and a compressed working week.

FIGURE 26: Type of flexible working arrangements offered (% of employers)

Types of flexible working offered	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Part-time work	81	88	98	98	100
Unpaid leave	79	87	99	98	100
Flexible hours of work	–	74	97	98	100
Work from home	28	71	95	96	99
Time-in-lieu	51	60	93	94	99
Job Sharing	42	52	66	65	94
Compressed working week	26	42	59	59	86
Purchased leave	28	38	42	43	96



GEI 4 – Parental leave

The proportion of primary carer's leave taken by men is slowly rising for both managers and non-managers.

FIGURE 27: Proportion of primary carer and universally available parental leave taken by gender and role (%)

Gender	Roles	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Women	All	88	86	83	89
Men	All	12	14	17	11
Women	Manager	78	77	72	86
Men	Manager	22	23	28	14
Women	Non-Manager	89	88	85	91
Men	Non-Manager	11	12	15	9

However, men still dominate the use of secondary carer's leave which offers them less time to spend with their family.

FIGURE 28: Proportion of secondary parental leave taken by gender and role (%)

Gender	Roles	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Women	All	4	5	5	4
Men	All	96	95	95	96
Women	Manager	3	4	4	3
Men	Manager	97	96	96	97
Women	Non-Manager	4	5	6	4
Men	Non-Manager	96	95	94	96

The number of private sector employers who offer paid parental leave continues to grow. The vast majority offer it equally to women and men, either offering it without distinction between primary and secondary carers or with a distinction. In 2023-24, 4% of employers offer primary carer paid parental leave to women only.

In 2022, 98% of Commonwealth public sector employers indicated they offered paid parental leave. This links to obligations under the *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973*, which sets out minimum leave entitlements for pregnant employees.



FIGURE 29: Proportion of employers providing employer-funded parental leave, by type of parental leave (%)

Type of Parental leave	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
TOTAL – universally available and primary carer leave	49	62	63	68	98
Universally available employer-funded parental leave	–	15	21	18	13
Employer-funded parental leave for primary carers	49	47	42	49	84
Employer-funded leave for secondary carers	39	40	36	42	83

Note: Proportions are of all employers.

Almost all employers provide parental leave on the birth or adoption of a child. More employers are now also offering paid parental leave for stillbirth and surrogacy.

The vast majority of employers pay superannuation on their paid parental leave. Paying superannuation on parental leave is an important issue for gender equality because it helps to enhance women's economic security in retirement. Women's retirement savings are generally lower than men's, with women taking more leave or career breaks for parenting and caring responsibilities.

FIGURE 30: Proportion of employers offering paid parental leave who pay superannuation on their leave (%)

Type of parental leave offered	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Employer-funded universally available or primary carer leave	81	84	84	98
Employer-funded leave for secondary carers	73	86	87	97

Conditions for accessing parental leave are improving. Private sector employers are, on average, offering more paid time for employees taking leave.

However, the proportion of private sector employers that expect parental leave to be taken within a certain time period is rising and most require employees to work for a certain period of time before becoming eligible. Having a qualifying period can impact career progression as it can inhibit individuals, who expect to start or grow their families, from changing employers.

On average, Commonwealth public sector employers offer more time to employees for parental leave. The *Maternity Leave (Commonwealth Employees) Act 1973* states that a pregnant employee is entitled to 12 weeks paid parental leave and many employers include additional weeks of paid leave and other entitlements in enterprise bargaining agreements. Like the private sector, most Commonwealth public sector employers have qualifying periods and term limits attached to parental leave, though at a slightly higher proportion.



FIGURE 31: Employer-funded parental leave offerings and conditions, by type of parental leave

Conditions	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Type of parental leave offered: Employer-funded parental leave universally available					
Average length of universally available leave (weeks)	–	10.5	12.0	12.3	13.5
Employers with a qualifying period (%)	–	82	82	82	87
Average length of qualifying period (months)	–	12.2	12.0	11.8	10.6
Employers with a time limit for taking leave (%)	–	74	79	81	100
Type of parental leave offered: Employer-funded parental leave for primary carers					
Average length of primary carers leave (weeks)	10.7	11.1	11.9	12.2	14.6
Employers with a qualifying period (%)	–	90	88	89	93
Average length of qualifying period (months)	–	12.5	12.2	12.2	11.9
Employers with a time limit for taking leave (%)	–	78	85	89	94
Type of parental leave offered: Employer-funded leave for secondary carers					
Average length of secondary carers leave (weeks)	1.5	2.4	3.0	2.9	3.5
Employers with a qualifying period (%)	–	83	83	84	56
Average length of qualifying period (months)	–	12.1	12.2	11.7	11.9
Employers with a time limit for taking leave (%)	–	80	86	91	93

Note: Proportions are of those employers that offer a particular type of employer-funded parental leave. The data that employers report to WGEA about parental leave has expanded in recent reporting periods.

GEI 4 – Support for employees with family or caring responsibilities

The proportion of private sector employers with a policy or strategy to support employees with family and caring responsibilities has almost doubled over the past decade, with sizable increases in the past two years. This signals an awareness of the need to support carers as they manage both paid and unpaid responsibilities. 76% of Commonwealth public sector employers had a formal policy or strategy in this area, on par with the private sector.

FIGURE 32: Proportion of employers with a policy or to support employees with family and caring responsibilities (%)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Policy or strategy to support employees with family and caring responsibilities	45	69	72	80	76

Note: More detail about the inclusions in employer policies or strategies for flexible work is available on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#).



GEI 4 – Support for employees experiencing family or domestic violence

More employers have developed a formal policy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence as awareness of the prevalence and impact grows.

FIGURE 33: Proportion of employers with a formal policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence (%)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Policy or strategy to support employees experiencing family or domestic violence	32	73	81	87	81

Changes to the *Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth) introduced a new National Employment Standard, entitling employees of most employers to 10 days paid family domestic violence leave each year.

The effect of this legislative change is evident in the increase in private sector employers offering leave reported in 2023-24.⁶ The changes were introduced after the reporting period for Commonwealth public sector employers. However, about three-quarters of employers were already providing both paid and unpaid leave that was not contained in an enterprise or workplace agreement.

FIGURE 34: Proportion of employers offering leave to employees measures to support employees who have experienced family or domestic violence (%)

Leave measures	Private sector 2021-22		Private sector 2022-23		Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022	
	not contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement	contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement	not contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement	contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement		not contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement	contained in an enterprise/workplace agreement
Access to paid family and domestic violence leave	34	30	61	53	95	71	41
Access to unpaid leave	93	56	91	55	86	77	33

Note: WGEA did not ask employers to distinguish whether leave was contained in an enterprise agreement/workplace agreement in the private sector 2023-24 reporting period. This change went into effect in the 2023 reporting period for Commonwealth public sector employers.

Employers are broadening the supports available to employees experiencing family or domestic violence with notable increases in the proportion that now offer workplace safety planning.

Access to particular supports differs widely between the private and Commonwealth public sector. Key areas of progress in the private sector include higher rates of employers offering workplace safety planning and training of key personnel. More detail about the supports employers offer is available on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#).

⁶ Not all private sector employers reported providing paid leave in 2023-24. This could be because employers responded negatively to the question if they did not offer additional leave beyond the 10-day entitlement, or that they were unaware of the new requirement to offer paid leave.



Progress summary

Employers have embraced a broader range of flexible working arrangements options and cemented them in formal policies. The Commonwealth public sector is more likely to offer most forms of flexible working arrangements, and this may be a key reason for the higher rates of full-time employment in the sector.

More employers now offer paid parental leave to their employees, and they are expanding the range of supports available to employees with family or caring responsibilities. Employers are increasingly offering parental leave to both women and men, but more work needs to be done to encourage men to take up primary carer's leave.

Increasing numbers of employers recognise their role in supporting employees experiencing family and domestic violence with significant rises in the proportion that offer workforce planning, paid leave and additional supports.

Enhancing the support available, selecting targets, applying evidence-informed actions and working to challenge gender stereotypes will bring further progress.



GEI 5 – Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace

The proportion of private sector employers consulting employees about gender equality has hit a record high, along with the proportion of employers that have a formal policy to do so.

While a high proportion of Commonwealth public sector employers consult employees on issues of gender equality (78%), less than one-third (30%) have formalised their consultation plans through a policy or strategy.

FIGURE 35: Proportion of employers with formal policy of strategy on consultation and that consulted employees on gender (%)

	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Formal policy or strategy for consulting employees on gender equality	–	30	31	51	30
Consulted employees about gender equality	48	48	47	69	78

The rapid rise in consultation likely links to anticipation of the publication of employer gender pay gaps which provided the impetus. Of those employers who consulted with employees on gender equality issues, most approached all staff, and this has remained consistent. This suggests employers recognise that gender equality impacts everyone in the workplace.

The way in which private sector employers consulted with employees is changing. More employers are using surveys and exit interviews as opposed to consultative committees or groups. While it may be seen as more efficient, it is important employers also create opportunities for deeper understanding and discussion that can help them to take effective action.

Commonwealth public sector employers are more likely to use a consultative committee and a survey, an approach that returns both quantitative and qualitative insights. Slightly more than one quarter of employers reported other means of consulting employees which are specific to the Commonwealth public sector, including the APS Employee Census and APS-wide enterprise bargaining consultations, which began in November 2022.



FIGURE 36: Methods of employee consultation (% of employers)

Methods	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Survey	43	45	59	69	69
Exit interview	43	30	49	62	30
Consultative committee or group	37	58	45	43	80
Performance discussions	32	51	31	40	13
Focus groups	20	23	27	31	30
Other	34	29	21	22	28

Note: Proportion of employers is out of those that consulted with employees.

Progress summary

Employers have renewed focus on employee consultation on matters concerning gender equality in the workplace, likely in anticipation of WGEA publishing employer gender pay gaps. In the 2023-24 reporting period, more employers are consulting employees and more employers now have policies or strategies on consultation. Whereas the data once showed employers underutilised consultation, it now indicates employers see it as a valuable mechanism, providing them the opportunity to test employee perceptions, understand their priorities and consider solutions.



GEI 6 – Sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination

As a result of legislative changes, employers are now asked to give more detail about how they manage workplace sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination. This includes prevalence data, and an employer's strategies for prevention and response, risk assessment and management policies or practices. Employers are also asked to detail supports for employees who had experienced such harassment or discrimination.

Many of the questions around the issue of workplace sexual harassment required a private sector employer response for the first time in the 2023-24 reporting period. Commonwealth public sector employers will report against these expanded questions in the 2024 reporting period.

A high number of private sector employers reported having a formal policy or strategy on the prevention of, and response to, sexual harassment. This can likely be attributed to high awareness of the *Sex Discrimination Act* and state and territory-based anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation that sets out what constitutes unlawful sex discrimination.

In 2023-24, many employers reported having a more detailed formal policy or strategy for GEI 6. Most included disclosure processes and leadership accountabilities. Fewer include the frequency and nature of reporting to the governing body and management on sexual harassment, and processes for parties to agree on the investigator of an incident. Such inclusions were stipulated in just under half of employer policies or strategies. More detail about the inclusions in employers policies or strategies is available on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#).

In 2022, almost all (97%) Commonwealth public sector employers had a policy or strategy on prevention and response to sexual harassment.

FIGURE 37: Employers with a formal policy to prevent and respond to sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex discrimination (%)

Measures	Private sector 2013-14	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24	Commonwealth public sector 2022
Formal policy or strategy	96.1	98.4	98.5	98.9	96.6

While private sector employers are more likely (97.4% in 2022-23) to have a grievance process within their policy or strategy than Commonwealth public sector employers (83%), there is a dedicated process in the Commonwealth public sector for reporting suspected misconduct.

In 2023-24 WGEA's private sector employer reporting included several questions about the role of leadership in achieving progress on GEI 6. Leaders have an important role in curating a workplace culture that addresses sexual harassment and promotes inclusivity and gender equality.

The new data revealed most CEOs review policies related to sexual harassment and more than 90% communicate their expectations to the workforce. Boards and governing bodies are less likely to do either, and this presents a significant opportunity for progress.



FIGURE 38: Proportion of employers with a policy or strategy on sexual harassment / discrimination that have leadership review and communication built into processes (%)

Leadership	Reviewed policy	Communicated expectations to employees
Governing Body	55	62
CEO or equivalent	85	91

Deepening the method and timing of communication from both groups is another opportunity. Few CEOs communicate their expectations on safety, respectful and inclusive workplace conduct regularly, or before critical events where incidents of sexual harassment and discrimination are known to be more prevalent.

Expanding the actions employers take to prevent sexual harassment is a key area for progress. 87% of employers include sexual harassment in their risk management plans. Of those, most focus their actions on training.

FIGURE 39: Actions and responses in risk management process, expressed as percentage of employers that address sexual harassment in their health and safety risk management process

Area	Private sector 2023-24
Train people managers in prevention of sexual harassment	74
Train staff on mitigation and control measures	50
Make workplace adjustments	46
Change or develop new control measures	42
Undertake and act on a culture audit of the relevant business or division	35
Train identified contact officers	30
Other	10

Training is important to ensure managers, non-managers and governing body members are well-equipped to prevent sexual harassment. While most private sector employers provided training, this was more frequently offered to managers and non-managers than to Directors, and most often at induction. This misses an opportunity for consistent education on an important workplace issue. Increasing rates of training for governing bodies could also help them to understand and communicate their expectations of a safe workforce.

FIGURE 40: Proportion of employers who provide training on sexual harassment (%)

Timing of training	Private sector 2021-22	Private sector 2022-23	Private sector 2023-24			Common-wealth public sector 2022
	All managers	All managers	All managers	All non-managers	Governing body	All managers
At induction	69	74	76	76	48	59
At promotion	–	2	6	3	2	3
Annually	–	36	59	57	39	43



Multiple times a year	–	2	7	6	4	3
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Ensuring the training provided addresses the specific impacts and experiences on diverse cohorts and comprehensively covers the broader effects sexual harassment can have in a workplace is another area where employers have the opportunity to make sizeable improvements. Including instruction on self-care for responders or trauma-informed responses to disclosures would benefit all employees, not just victims and perpetrators and assist in making workplaces safe for all through understanding and culture change.

The [WGEA Data Explorer](#) contains more data and detail about training inclusions, employer support to employees involved in and affected by sexual harassment, and inclusions in risk management processes.

Disclosure of an incident of sexual harassment at work, whether made formally or informally, helps employers to address and measure the scale of the issue within the workplace. Private sector employers overwhelmingly have processes for employees to report to HR or designated responding staff. Expanding the availability of anonymous disclosure could encourage more employees to report in future.

FIGURE 41: Proportion of employers with avenues for disclosure (%)

Area	Private sector 2023-24
Process for disclosure to human resources or other designated responding staff	98
Process to disclose anonymously	68
Process for workers to identify and disclose potential risks of sexual harassment, without a specific incident occurring	60
Process for disclosure to confidential/ethics hotline or similar	60
Process to disclose after their employment has concluded	50
Special procedures for disclosures about organisational leaders and board members	37
Process for disclosure to union/worker representative	29
None of the above	0

Note: A small number of employers reported they have none of the above. This is shown as a zero due to rounding.

Recording information regarding the prevalence of sexual harassment allows employers to understand the magnitude of the issue, to direct support appropriately and to track progress. 72% of private sector employers collect data on sexual harassment prevalence including prevalence and complaints in their workplace.



FIGURE 42: Types of data collected by the employers that collect prevalence data (%)

Type of data	Private sector 2023-24
Collect prevalence data	72
Number of formal disclosures or complaints made in a year	64
Outcomes of investigations	55
Number of informal disclosures or complaints made in a year	39
Gender of the complainant/aggrieved or victim	31
Gender of the accused or perpetrator	30
Anonymous disclosures through a staff survey	27

78% of employers report on sexual harassment to the CEO at least annually. Fewer (67%) report to the governing body.

FIGURE 43: Frequency of reporting sexual harassment to the governing body and executive (% of employers)

Private sector 2023-24			
Cohort	Regularly / At every meeting	Multiple times per year	Annually
Governing Body	20	30	17
CEO, HOBs	27	38	13
KMPs	17	29	11
All managers	8	14	11

When reporting workplace sexual harassment to the governing body and management, employers are most likely to include data and analysis on outcomes, the nature of the harassment, action for prevention and response, and consequences for perpetrators. However, few employers are considering the effectiveness of their response and their data over time.



FIGURE 44: Inclusions in reports on sexual harassment to governing body and management (%)

Inclusion in reports	Private sector 2023-24
Outcome of reports of sexual harassment	61
Nature of workplace sexual harassment	56
Organisational action to prevent and respond to sexual harassment	55
Consequences for perpetrators of sexual harassment	53
Prevalence of workplace sexual harassment	43
Identified risks of workplace sexual harassment	39
Effectiveness of response to reports of sexual harassment	27
Analysis of sexual harassment trends	26
Use and context of non-disclosure agreements or confidentiality clauses	16

Note: Percentage shown is proportion of employers who report on sexual harassment to the governing body and management. Employers could provide multiple responses.

Progress summary

WGEA's data shows employers are moving beyond compliance and proactively addressing issues of sexual harassment. An opportunity for progress exists through more engagement from governing bodies through training, reporting prevalence data and communication of expectations. Tracking the effectiveness of employer actions over time and broadening the supports available to include responders and bystanders could lead to accelerated progress on culture change.





Conclusion

Australia's *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* has established a world-leading approach to gender equality reporting and accountability for Australian employers. As a result of this Act, WGEA helps employers to understand the drivers of gender inequality and provides evidence-informed guidance on key actions that work to drive change.

WGEA's valuable longitudinal dataset now holds more than a decade of information on workplace gender equality in nearly 8,000 workplaces across Australia. Looking back over the past decade, progress is being made. Recent reforms have started to accelerate the rate of change, just as they did when the Act was first introduced.

Evidence of progress recent years can be seen across each of the 6 GEIs. More employers now have policies and strategies for each of the gender indicators, record numbers are conducting a gender pay gap analysis, taking action on the results and consulting their employees. Employers are taking their positive duty to prevent workplace sex discrimination and sexual harassment seriously. In the past year, a majority of employers have reduced their gender pay gaps.

Key areas for improvement do remain, such as addressing occupational and industrial segregation and improving gender balance on boards. Employers use their WGEA data to pinpoint hotspots of inequality in their workplace and create an action plan to address them.

Future years of employer reporting to WGEA will demonstrate the ongoing impact of reforms, particularly the requirement for WGEA to publish employer gender pay gaps. New requirements for employers with 500 or more direct employees to select and meet gender equality targets will also be a catalyst for more employers to take effective action to address gender equality in their workplace.





Additional information

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