

# Workplace Gender Equality Agency Statement of Intent

This Statement of Intent outlines the Workplace Gender Equality Agency's response to the Statement of Expectations issued by Senator the Hon Katy Gallagher, Minister for Women on 23 July 2025.

## WGEA's role and operating environment

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) is an independent Commonwealth statutory authority established by the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (WGE Act).

WGEA is a key part of the Australian Government's architecture to achieve gender equality, administering the WGE Act whose objects include removing the barriers to full and equal participation of women, eliminating discrimination on the basis of gender and improving the productivity and competitiveness of Australian employers through the advancement of gender equality in employment and in the workplace.

WGEA's statutory functions include assisting employers to promote and improve gender equality in Australian workplaces and advising the Minister for Women on matters relating to workplace gender equality. This occurs either directly or in collaboration with the Office for Women in the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet who is the policy owner of the WGE Act.

As a regulator, WGEA enables and enforces compliance with the WGE Act requiring Australian employers of 100 or more employees to report annually to WGEA against 6 gender equality indicators (GEIs). The GEIs include equal remuneration between women and men. The annual reporting process contributes to a world-leading dataset. As a driver of change, WGEA provides advice and assistance to employers including education and capability building. We also assess and measure workplace gender equality performance and publish data and insights on the state of gender equality in the workplace.

By publishing data and insights, including gender pay gaps at an employer, industry and national level, WGEA builds public understanding of gender equality in the workplace and equips employers and Government with insights to take action to close the gender pay gap.

In March 2025, the WGE Act was amended to require employers of 500 or more employees to select and commit to achieving 3 gender equality targets. Supporting employers to select meaningful targets in 2026 and meet or improve against them over a 3-year period is a WGEA priority.

WGEA operates in accordance with the broader governance and performance expectations of the *Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act 2013* and the *Public Service Act 1999*, as well as the *Resource Management Guide (RMG) - Regulator Performance 128*.

## Government priorities for gender equality

WGEA will continue to align our work with the Government's vision for achieving gender equality over the next decade, as set out in *A Strategy for Gender Equality (Working for Women)*. The priority areas for action set out in the Strategy reinforce the importance of WGEA's role in driving gender equality, particularly in relation to economic equality and security, leadership, representation and decision-making. Our data features prominently in *Working for Women's*

reporting framework. By helping to accelerate change, acting as an effective interface between Government and employers and sharing good practice WGEA plays a critical role in driving effort to achieve the Government's vision over the next decade.

In the past 3 years, WGEA has supported and implemented key Government reforms aimed at accelerating the closing of the gender pay gap, supporting flexible work and protecting against workplace sexual harassment and abuse. WGEA will continue to align its regulatory, reporting and capability building efforts to support more equal, fairer and safer workplaces.

WGEA aims to be responsive to changing social, technological and commercial contexts, including relevant policy priorities agreed to by the Australian Government and the National Cabinet. As a small agency, WGEA relies on guidance from the Office for Women and membership on relevant interdepartmental committees to better inform our understanding of these priorities and help us meet this commitment.

### **Driving change through regulatory action, awareness and education**

WGEA will continue our effort to be a best practice regulator, consistent with the Regulator Performance Resource Management Guide.

WGEA's Compliance Strategy describes our constructive regulatory approach prioritising education to support compliance and direct support to aid continuous improvement. To maintain integrity of the legislative scheme, WGEA responds to non-compliance by naming employers, if the non-compliance is deliberate, repeated or without reasonable excuse.

WGEA will also ensure that our compliance activity and administrative practice supports the Government's commitment to strengthen compliance with procurement rules which make sure the Government is only working with companies that meet WGEA requirements. WGEA will continue to support the Office for Women, including with appropriate data, on refreshing the Workplace Gender Equality Procurement Principles as a matter of priority to support the implementation of the gender equality targets legislation.

WGEA will continue to pursue opportunities to contribute to improving Australia's productivity performance by streamlining gender equality reporting requirements without diminishing the ability to generate actionable insights through our dataset and noting that the introduction of gender equality targets requires consistency in data collection over a 3-year target cycle.

WGEA looks forward to collaborating with the Office for Women as the policy owner and other stakeholders including government agencies, peak employer groups and unions on any legislative proposals to collect additional data. This includes consideration of the remaining recommendations from the 2021 Review of the WGE Act.

WGEA will continue to build and maintain public support and trust in our data collection, reporting and insights, with a focus on timely and accessible reports and educational resources and support to translate this knowledge into action in the workplace. Notable in this regard, in the past 2 years WGEA has expended significant effort on our Data Explorer to present comprehensive employer data in a searchable, flexible and dynamic way.

The current WGEA employer reporting portal limits how much we can improve employer reporting experience, however, WGEA actively seeks employer feedback. We have an ongoing program of system enhancement, including expanding self-service for updating contact details and trialing AI agents to support our small team in responding to less complex employer support requests.

### **Build capacity and awareness of employers and the public**

As a driver of change, key partner and subject matter expert in the gender equality landscape, WGEA will continue to use its dataset and insights to educate, motivate, and support Australian employers, peak bodies, unions and other key stakeholders to improve gender equality outcomes in Australian workplaces. In addition to progress and annual reports, WGEA commits to providing timely briefings to the Government on best practice, including for its own workforce and tangible actions that employers are undertaking to make a difference across the 6 GEIs. WGEA is delighted to participate in Government initiatives that aim to close the gender pay gap.

WGEA will continue to provide the Minister for Women advance notice of our public campaigns and significant public data releases and reports, and we look forward to collaborating with the Government on these campaigns and data releases to maximise impact.

### **Collaboration and engagement with the Office for Women**

WGEA has developed and will continue to foster a strong working relationship with the Office for Women that recognises our distinct but complementary roles as independent regulator and policy owner of the WGE Act. We are committed to supporting the Minister for Women with well-rounded advice developed through regular and open engagement. WGEA is committed to agreeing a 3-year strategic work plan with the Office for Women to deliver on Government's workplace gender equality priorities and working as partners to develop the data and legislative amendments necessary to achieve the ambitions of *Working for Women*.

### **Leadership of the CEO**

The WGEA CEO will meet the Minister's expectations on leadership as set out in the Statement of Expectations and will work collaboratively with the Minister for Women, Government and Office for Women to achieve our gender equality vision, where all people are fairly represented and equally valued and rewarded in the workplace.

2 October 2025