

## Media release

27 March 2014

### WGEA welcomes government's decision on gender reporting

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency welcomes the government's decision to retain the 2013-14 reporting matters for the 2014-15 reporting period.<sup>1</sup>

The decision to delay by one year the introduction of additional gender reporting requirements that had been due to commence in the 2014-15 reporting period will reduce the effort required by employers to report to the Agency in 2015 while allowing further consultation on ways future reporting requirements can be streamlined.

The government had been considering making changes to reporting matters for the 2014-15 reporting period that would have wound back the additional matters and some of the 2013-14 reporting matters that also applied in the 2014-15 reporting year.

This prompted a number of business leaders, industry associations and other interest groups to publicly state the importance of standardised gender reporting to driving improvements in gender equality and lifting female workforce participation.

Ms Conway said the government had been responsive to stakeholder concerns. "There is a broad group of stakeholders from the business community and beyond who are concerned to see we get the right balance. It is essential that we are able to deliver value back to those employers who report to us, commensurate with the effort of reporting.

"Changes to reporting should be based on an assessment of whether the data and resulting benchmarks give employers a valuable insight into how well they're performing and where they need to improve. The importance of transparency should also not be underestimated.

"The Agency is interacting daily with the employers who report to us. This uniquely positions us to identify clearly where improvements may be needed so we look forward to playing a central role in the consultation process," Ms Conway said.

#### Minimum standard introduced for 2014-15

In addition to the reporting matters for the 2014-15 reporting period, the government has introduced a minimum standard for relevant employers with 500 or more staff to have in place a policy or strategy in at least one of the following areas from 1 October 2014:

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<sup>1</sup>Reports are due to the Agency between 1 April and 31 May each year, based on the preceding 12 month period ending 31 March. i.e. the 2014-15 reporting period refers to the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. Reports on that period are due between 1 April 2015 and 31 May 2015.



1. gender composition of the workforce
2. equal remuneration between women and men
3. 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
4. sex-based harassment and discrimination

If an employer that is required to meet this minimum standard does not do so, it will have a further two years to improve against the minimum standard before it may be deemed non-compliant by the Agency. Ms Conway said she doubted employers with 500 or staff would struggle to meet the minimum standard.

"Based on our interactions with employers of this size, I expect they will be able to meet this minimum standard," Ms Conway said.

### **Online reporting starts next week**

The new online reporting portal through which employers will submit reports for the 2013-14 reporting period is due to open next week on 1 April. This is the first year reporting requirements under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* have been fully operational as 2012-13 was a transitional year.

The data collected will provide an unprecedented picture of the state of gender equality across Australian workplaces.

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### **For more information contact**

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### **About the Workplace Gender Equality Agency**

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency is an Australian Government statutory agency charged with promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces. The Agency is responsible for administering the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012. The Agency's vision is for women and men to be equally represented, valued and rewarded in the workplace. The Agency was formerly known as the Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Agency. More information is available at [www.wgea.gov.au](http://www.wgea.gov.au)