

GENDER EQUALITY UPDATE

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October 2025



Agenda



Overview of changes to gender equity reporting



Intersect with other legal obligations



MBW's charter



Best practice



THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE – GENDER EQUALITY REPORTING



WGEA Requirements

The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* requires that 'relevant employers' submit a report to WGEA against a set of standardised gender equality indicators (**GEIs**). The GEIs relate to areas that are critical to gender equality:

- GEI 1: Gender composition of the workforce
- GEI 2: Gender composition of governing bodies
- GEI 3: Equal remuneration between women and men
- GEI 4: Availability and utility of employment terms, flexible working arrangements and support for family and caring responsibilities
- GEI 5: Consultation with employees on gender equality in the workplace
- GEI 6: Sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination.



WGEA Requirements

- ▶ Employers are required to submit:
 - an online questionnaire related to policies, strategies and actions on gender equality
 - a spreadsheet on Workforce Management Statistics (including information on employee appointments, promotions, resignations and parental leave)
 - a Workforce Profile spreadsheet, including information on workforce composition, salaries and remuneration.



WGEA Requirements – Designated Relevant Employers

- ▶ Designated Relevant Employers are required to have policies or strategies in place to support each of the six gender equality indicators (GEIs).
- ▶ These are reported on in the annual reporting to WGEA.

Gender Equality Indicators (GEIs) & objectives

The GEIs derive from section 3 of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* (the Act) and are reproduced below.

Item	Gender Equality Indicator (GEI)	Objective
1	Gender composition of the workforce	Supporting gender equality in the designated relevant employer's workplace
2	Gender composition of governing bodies of relevant employers	Supporting and achieving gender equality in the designated relevant employer's governing body
3	Equal remuneration between women and men	In relation to employees of the designated relevant employer, ensuring equal remuneration between women and men
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	Providing effective flexible working arrangements for employees of the designated relevant employer with family or caring responsibilities
5	Consultation with employees on issues concerning gender equality in the workplace	Ensuring employees are consulted and have input on issues concerning gender equality in the designated relevant employer's workplace
6	Sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination	Prevention of, and appropriate response to, sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination in the designated relevant employer's workplace



New WGEA Requirements

- ▶ From 2026, Designated Relevant Employers (ie with 500 or more employees) will be required are now required to:
 - Select three specific gender equality targets
 - Achieve (or make improvement(s) in respect of) the selected gender equality targets. This will be tracked over a three-year 'target cycle'
 - Publicly report on the progress made in respect of the selected gender equality targets to the WGEA.
- ▶ WGEA has released guidelines for target selection
- ▶ The targets in effect reflect the gender equality indicators





INTERSECTS WITH OTHER LEGAL OBLIGATIONS



Psychosocial Hazard Regulations

- ▶ We now have regulations in all states and territories concerning **psychosocial hazards** (Victoria's commence in Dec!)
- ▶ Generally speaking, these regulations impose requirements to implement control measures to:
 - Eliminate **psychosocial hazards**
 - If not reasonably practicable, minimise the risks
- ▶ Some jurisdictions have specific additional obligations eg in Qld there is a requirement to have in place a **prevention plan** on **sexual harassment**



Psychosocial Hazards that impinge on gender equity

Workplace interactions – are discrimination and sexual harassment barriers to female participation and progression?

Job design – is the job structured that makes it inflexible/unsafe for women or persons who require flexible working arrangements?

Workplace environment – are there adequate facilities for female workers?



Respect @ Work

Witnessing and hearing about workplace sexual harassment



In the last five years,

41% of people **witnessed or heard** about the sexual harassment of another person at work.

Just over **a third** of those people (35%) **took action** to prevent or reduce harm.

The majority of people (61%) who took action after witnessing or hearing about workplace sexual harassment **said that the harassment stopped** as a result.

- ▶ AHRC reporting from 2022 reveals that sexual harassment in Australian workplaces continues at an alarming rate
- ▶ This report resulted in a number of important regulatory changes

Incidence of workplace sexual harassment

In the last 12 months

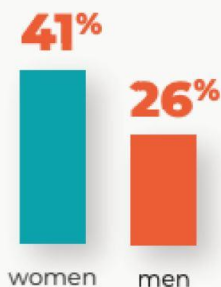
About
1 in 5
people

(19%) have been sexually harassed at work.

In the last 5 years

About
1 in 3
people

(33%) have been sexually harassed at work (41% of women and 26% of men).



Respect @ Work

Employers/PCBU's required to take "reasonable and proportionate measures" to eliminate as far as possible:

discrimination
on the ground
of sex;

unlawful
sexual
harassment;

unlawful
harassment
on the ground
of sex;

workplace
environments
that are
hostile on the
ground of sex;
and

acts of
victimisation.



AHRC Guidance: Seven Standards

- ▶ The AHRC expects all organisations and businesses with obligations under the *Sex Discrimination Act* to meet these Standards.
- ▶ In addressing these Standards, organisations will be progressing towards the ultimate goal – gender equity
- ▶ Critical that this is driven from the top and that a psychologically safe environment ensures that concerns can be raised safely and are addressed



Right to request flexible work



Under the NES, employees who have completed 12 months' continuous service AND who fall into a protected category may request flexible working arrangements.



Employees need to make the request in writing, setting out the reason for the request and specific changes sought.



Employers are required to respond to the request within 21 days.



Employers may refuse a request on reasonable business grounds.



Eligibility categories

- ▶ are the parent, or have responsibility for the care, of a child who is school aged or younger
- ▶ are a carer (under the Carer Recognition Act 2010)
- ▶ are a person with disability
- ▶ are 55 or older
- ▶ are pregnant
- ▶ are experiencing family and domestic violence, or
- ▶ provide care or support to an immediate family or household member who is experiencing family and domestic violence.



What does flexibility look like?

- ▶ Examples of flexible working arrangements include changes to:
 - hours of work – for example, changes to start and finish times
 - patterns of work – for example, split shifts or job sharing
 - locations of work – for example, working from home.



Best Practice Strategies

- ▶ Understand your minimum obligations
- ▶ Consider how you can support your organisation's approach to gender equity – commitment from the top down
- ▶ Train your managers
- ▶ Build infrastructure to ensure success (e.g., enabling technology etc)
- ▶ Build mechanisms to monitor and evaluate use and impact (and share success stories)



MBW Charter

The MBW Charter aligns with these legal obligations – the ultimate goal is gender equity!

Charter signatories will be on track to meeting their reporting and legislative obligations.

The Action Planning Toolkit provided to all signatories, provides clear direction on how signatories can implement the pledges they have agreed to.

Not only does this provide a clear path in how to improve gender equity across the meat industry but assists organisation in meeting their legislative obligations under the WGEA gender equality targets.



How we can assist



Education

- WHS
- Respect @ Work
- Management training



Policies/guidelines



Advice on approach to meeting gender equity requirements and psychosocial hazard management



QUESTIONS?





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