Submission to the Remuneration Tribunal Review of Full-time Public Offices

Review of Remuneration Arrangements for the Chief Executive Officer, Workplace Gender Equality Agency

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) welcomes the opportunity to provide a submission to the Remuneration Tribunal's review of remuneration arrangements for Full-time Public Offices.

This submission relates to the remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of WGEA and proposes consideration of whether the office's current remuneration appropriately reflects the contemporary work value, statutory responsibilities, organisational complexity and public accountability of the role.

Background

The CEO of WGEA is appointed under the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* and is responsible for leading an independent statutory agency with national responsibilities for promoting and improving gender equality in Australian workplaces.

The role is responsible for administration of the legislative reporting framework established under the Act, oversight of compliance and regulatory functions, stewardship of nationally significant workforce datasets, engagement with Parliament and Ministers, and leadership of WGEA's research, education, public reporting and policy advisory functions.

Aligning to a blended SES Band 2/3, the agency head role was originally a Principal Executive Office (PEO) and the remuneration was negotiated in 2011. The role transitioned from a PEO to a Full-time Public Office holder classification in the jurisdiction of the Remuneration Tribunal in mid-2019. WGEA has no record of the PEO remuneration being reviewed between 2011 and 2019. When the transition to PEO occurred, the remuneration was aligned to the next beneficial tier in the Remuneration Tribunal Determination. Work value was not reviewed then or since, however the Agency's responsibilities, resources, public profile and accountability have expanded significantly.

There are roughly 100 specific full-time offices remunerated above the WGEA CEO in 3 ranges: $800 - $900K, $500 - $700K, $330K - $490K. The WGEA CEO remuneration is equal to 4 other full-time public offices at $314K. Fewer than 20 full-time public offices are remunerated less than the WGEA CEO.

Expansion of Statutory Responsibilities and Regulatory Scope

Since the CEO role was last comprehensively assessed pre-2011, WGEA's responsibilities have expanded substantially because of legislative, policy and operating environment reforms.

WGEA now administers a reporting framework covering approximately **10,500 employers and almost 5.9 million employees**, representing Australia's largest and a world-leading employer-level workforce dataset.

Following the 2021 Review of the Act, the Australian Government implemented significant legislative reforms that have materially expanded WGEA's role. These reforms include:

- publication of employer gender pay gaps
- increased employer accountability measures
- expansion of jurisdiction to the Commonwealth public sector
- introduction of gender equality targets for large employers; and
- enhanced compliance and transparency obligations.

The CEO is responsible for leading the administration of these reforms and ensuring the Agency had the capability, governance arrangements and systems needed to deliver them successfully and continuously improve.

National Data Stewardship and Public Accountability

The CEO leads an agency now responsible for the collection, management, analysis and publication of workforce data that attracts significant public, media, employer and parliamentary scrutiny.

WGEA publishes employer gender pay gap information for approximately **8,500 direct employers and 1600 corporate groups**.

The publication of employer-level gender pay gaps represented a substantial increase in the Agency's public profile and accountability. WGEA's data and analysis now inform discussion and decision-making across government, business, investor, academic and community sectors and are regularly referenced in national debates regarding productivity, workforce participation, pay equity and economic policy.

The CEO has responsibility for ensuring the integrity, transparency and credibility of these nationally significant datasets and public reporting activities.

Expansion into the Commonwealth Public Sector

Legislative amendments in 2022 expanded WGEA's remit to include Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees.

As a result, WGEA now collects, analyses and reports on workplace gender equality outcomes from 129 Commonwealth public sector employers in addition to the private sector reporting population. This brings just under 300,000 additional employees into the dataset.

The expansion has required the development of new reporting frameworks, employer guidance, compliance arrangements, public reporting products and stakeholder engagement approaches.

Growth in Organisational Scale and Resources

The organisational scale of WGEA has increased materially since 2011 and after entering the Tribunal’s jurisdiction in 2019.

The Australian Government provided **$17.5 million** additional funding to implement the 2021 Review. WGEA also received **$4.35 million over four years** to support delivery of reforms associated with the Government's response to *Respect@Work*.

These additional investments supported a significant increase in capability and staffing, including an increase of 15 additional positions from 2022-23.

The CEO was responsible for leading this organisational growth while continuing to deliver core regulatory functions and implementing major national reform initiatives.

Strategic Leadership and Governance Requirements

The CEO role now requires leadership across a broader and more complex range of functions than when remuneration settings were originally established.

The position requires expertise in best practice regulation, organisational governance, data stewardship, communications, stakeholder engagement, technology transformation and public administration.

The CEO is required to work closely with ministers, Parliament, the Office for Women, employer groups, unions, investors, researchers and other regulators while maintaining the Agency's independence and statutory responsibilities.

The role also involves oversight of increasingly complex issues including large-scale data management, information security, artificial intelligence governance, transparency initiatives, compliance monitoring and consecutive delivery of significant legislative reform programs.

Alignment with Contemporary Public Office Arrangements

Since the CEO position was last substantively considered by the Tribunal, there have been significant changes to WGEA's statutory responsibilities, organisational scale and public accountability, including substantive changes during the 7 years when the position was outside the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

As outlined above, the CEO now leads a nationally significant statutory agency responsible for implementing major government reforms, regulating approximately 10,500 employers, overseeing reporting relating to almost 5.9 million employees, administering gender equality targets and managing one of Australia's most prominent workplace transparency initiatives through publication of employer gender pay gaps.

WGEA provides this information to assist the Tribunal undertaking a contemporary assessment of the CEO position, having regard to the role as it exists today.

Conclusion

WGEA welcomes the Tribunal's review of remuneration arrangements for Full-time Public Offices.

This submission seeks to provide the Tribunal with factual information about the development of the WGEA CEO role since it was last substantively considered, including changes to:

- WGEA's statutory remit and regulatory responsibilities
- the implementation of significant legislative reforms
- the growth in staffing and government investment for the Agency's functions
- the size and scope of the reporting population including Commonwealth public sector employers
- the publication and stewardship of employer gender pay gap data and implementation of gender equality target setting for large employers
- the level of public accountability, stakeholder engagement and organisational complexity associated with the role.

WGEA provides this information to the Tribunal to assist in its contemporary assessment of the CEO position.

Yours sincerely,



Janette Dines
Chief Operating Officer
24 August 2026

Appendix A: Comparison of the WGEA CEO Role – 2018 and 2026

This table illustrates changes in work value, organisational scale and accountability since the role entered the Tribunal's jurisdiction.

Dimension	2019	2026
Office	Transition from Principal Executive Office to Public Office.	Public Office Holder. No work value review undertaken pre or post transition.
Legislative Environment	Administration of the *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* reporting framework for private sector employers.	Administration of significantly expanded legislative framework incorporating recommendations of the 2021 WGE Act Review, gender pay gap publication, Commonwealth public sector reporting and gender equality targets.
Employers Covered	Private sector employers with 100 or more employees.	Approximately 10,500 employers reporting annually, including Commonwealth public sector employers.
Employees Covered	Significant national workforce coverage through reporting scheme.	Approximately 5.9 million employees represented in WGEA reporting data.
Public Sector Coverage	No Commonwealth public sector reporting obligations.	Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees now report to WGEA, covering more than 120 employers and an additional 300,000 employees.
Employer Gender Pay Gap Reporting	Not published. Employer data reported confidentially.	Publication of employer gender pay gaps for approximately 10,500 employers and corporate groups.
Gender Equality Targets	No targets framework.	CEO responsible for implementation of world first legislated gender equality targets scheme for large employers.
Regulatory Profile	Primarily reporting, education and compliance support functions.	Contemporary regulator with increased compliance, transparency, accountability, monitoring and public reporting responsibilities.

Government Reform Delivery	Existing legislative framework.	Delivery of multiple major Government reforms arising from the 2021 WGE Act Review and Respect@Work reforms.
Staffing	Pre-reform workforce.	Increase of 15 additional positions from 2022-23 to support expanded legislative functions and reform implementation.
Data	Workforce reporting data collected and analysed.	Stewardship of one of Australia's largest workplace datasets, covering approximately 5.9 million employees and supporting public reporting, policy development and research.
Public and Media Profile	Moderate stakeholder engagement.	High-profile national agency regularly informing public debate on productivity, workforce participation, pay equity, workplace culture and gender equality, with significant media and stakeholder scrutiny.
Stakeholder Complexity	Employers, government and workplace stakeholders.	Ministers, Parliament, Commonwealth agencies, investors, employer groups, unions, researchers, media, state and territory governments and international stakeholders.
Technology and Governance Responsibilities	Standard agency governance responsibilities.	Additional responsibilities relating to cyber security, advanced data governance, AI governance, transparency requirements and management of nationally significant public data assets.

Summary

Since the CEO position transitioned to a full-time public office holder role in 2019, the scope, complexity and accountability of the position have increased substantially. The role now encompasses leadership of a larger and more highly scrutinised organisation, implementation of major legislative reforms, stewardship of nationally significant public datasets, management of increased staffing and funding, and oversight of a regulatory framework affecting approximately 10,500 employers and almost 5.9 million Australian employees.

This appendix supports WGEA's submission that the work value of the CEO position warrants a contemporary assessment by the Tribunal.