



Australian Government



Workplace
Gender Equality
Agency

WGEA Glossary and Writing Style Guide

Version: November 2024



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Overview

Introduction

WGEA's Glossary & Style Guide is for all WGEA staff who write, edit or approve the Agency's internal and external content. It sets out a consistent and unified approach to WGEA's internal and external communications.

Consistent use of terminology, messaging, tone of voice and grammar is essential to build and retain WGEA's credibility as a trusted national authority in workplace gender equality, to avoid confusing our audiences, and to foster a shared understanding of the issue among stakeholders.

WGEA employees should refer to this guide in the development of all written content.

How to request an update

This Glossary & Style Guide is produced and managed by WGEA's Communications & Campaigns team. It is a living document that will be continually updated.

All WGEA teams are invited to submit requests to update advice and terminology in this guide to make sure content is accurate and framed to deliver communications that will resonate and connect with our audiences.

Please contact the Communications & Campaigns team at Media.Enquiries@wgea.gov.au to request any changes to the Glossary & Style Guide.

Using this Glossary & Style Guide

WGEA staff should use this guide to write, edit, review or approve all internal or external communications or documents that we produce, including:

- research papers
- parliamentary submissions or policy documents
- Senate Estimates briefs
- employer reporting resources
- governance documents (e.g. Annual Report, Progress Report, Corporate Plan, internal WGEA policy and procedure documents)
- digital communications
- stakeholder engagement (e.g. subscriber newsletter)
- media statements
- forms
- technical and specialist content.

Sources and references

WGEA uses the [Australian Government Style Manual](#) for decisions about grammar, formatting and for advice on [accessible and inclusive content](#).

All Agency content must comply with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.1](#).



Style Guide

Tone of voice

Tone of voice influences the way that readers engage with written content. Poor use of this technique may cause a reader to switch off or to misinterpret the meaning of your writing. But, used well, it is a powerful tool to build trust and to influence and motivate readers to engage with ideas and information.

Maintaining a clear and consistent tone of voice is important because it helps establish WGEA's personality and creates a strong 'verbal' identity. Some headline principles to refer to are detailed below.

Our tone of voice is:

- accessible
- inclusive
- informed
- collaborative
- inspiring.

Reinforce this tone of voice in the structure of your written communications.

Write in plain English. Use short words and sentences.

Further:

- use language that's informative and [inclusive](#)
- express ideas and information using everyday words. Avoid jargon
- avoid cliches, buzzwords and 'blinking words'. These phrases and terms might flow easily onto the page, but often they mean very little to your audience and are open to misinterpretation (i.e. see advice for 'work-life balance' in the **Common words** section of this guide)
- where appropriate, always use contractions (i.e. 'don't', 'you're' or 'we're')
- be mindful of clarity. Focus on **one idea or concept** in each sentence and keep it as brief as possible without compromising meaning or the accuracy of the communications.

Grammar and punctuation

WGEA follows conventions set out in the [APS Style Guide](#) for the use of grammar and punctuation.

Sentences should be in plain language and no longer than 25 words. Too much punctuation makes text crowded and difficult to read. If a sentence has a lot of punctuation marks, it might be a sign that the sentence is too long or complex. Try to rewrite into [shorter, clearer sentences](#).

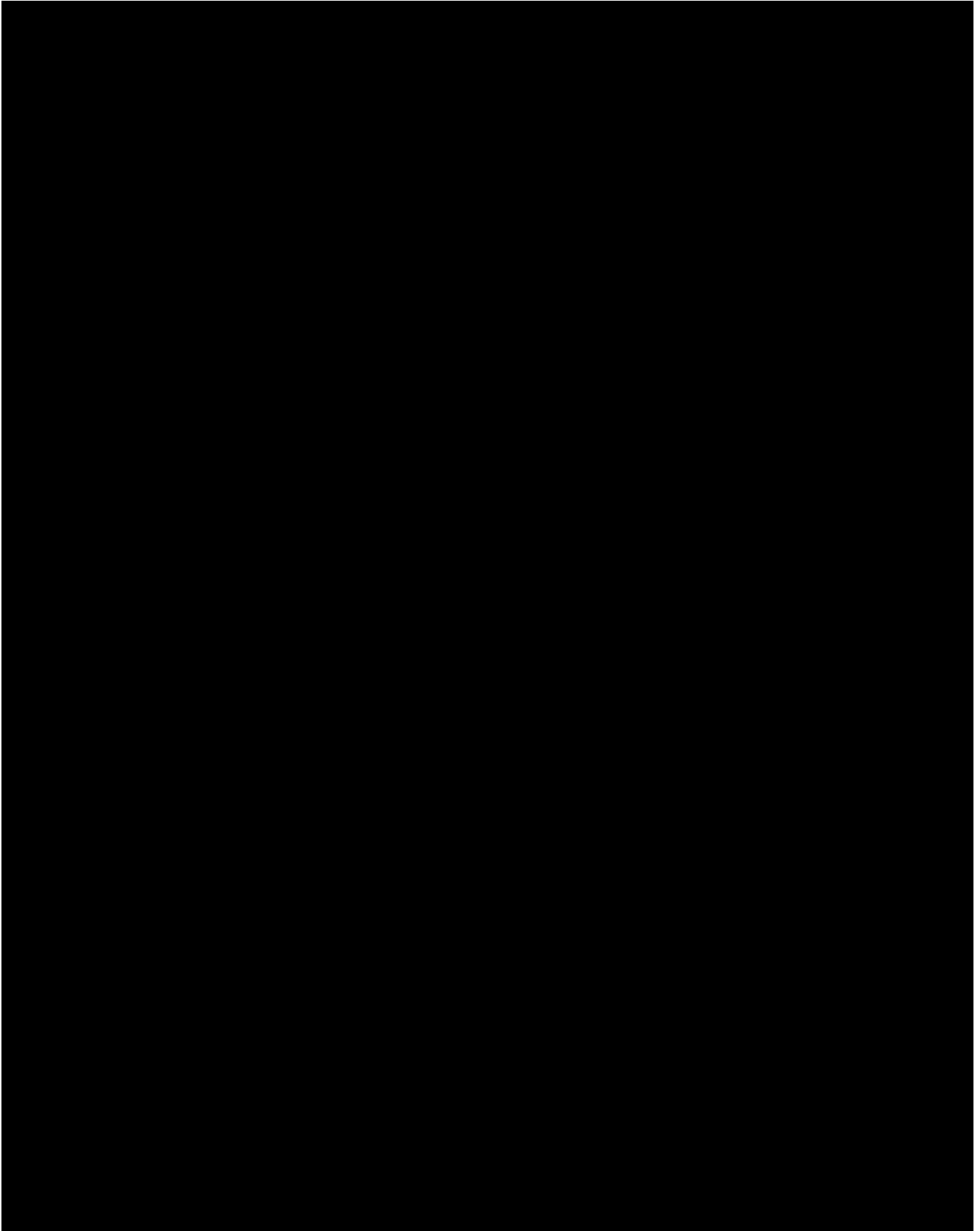
Avoid beginning sentences with a string of numbers and dates. The string of numbers can be confusing.

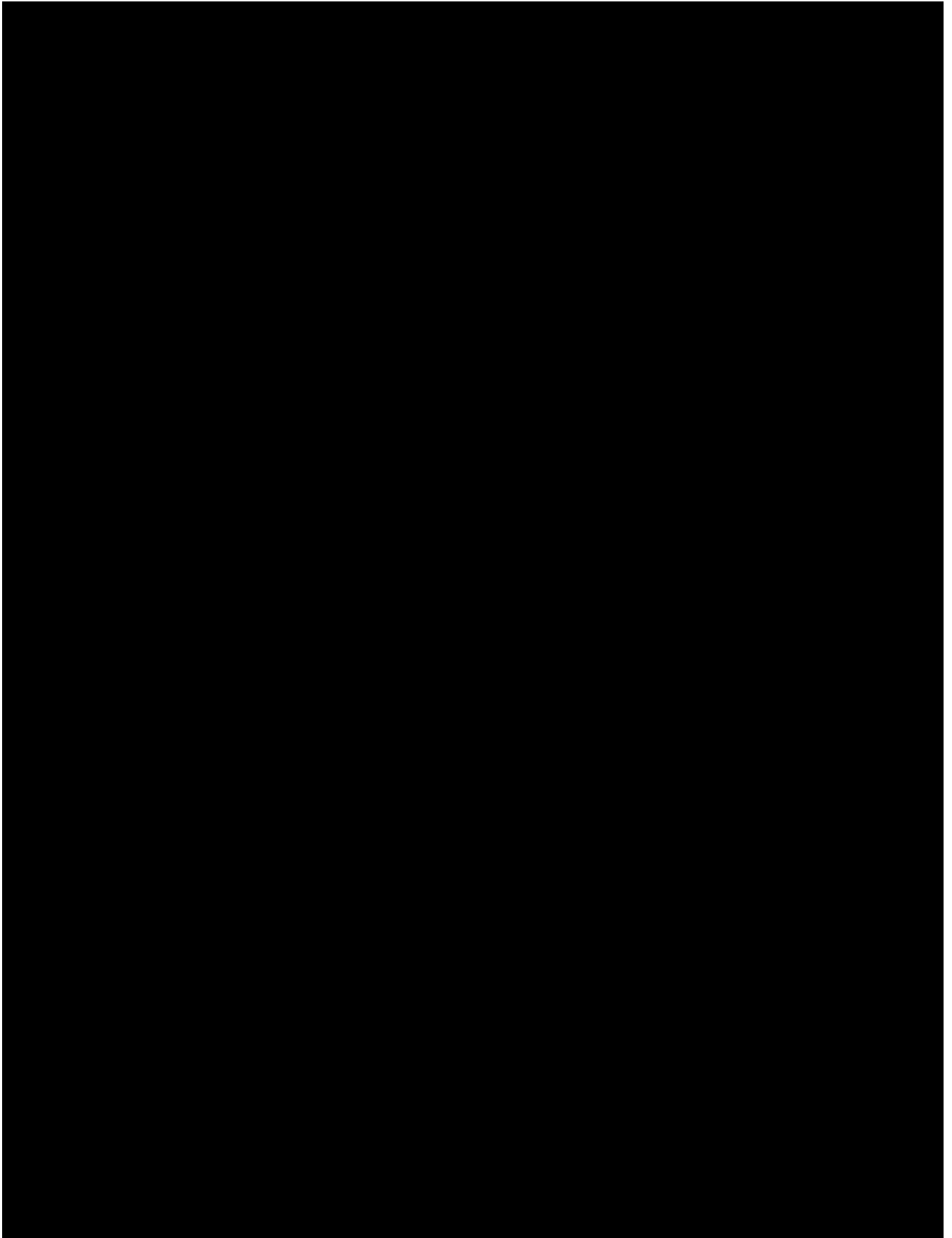
The APS Style Guide provides tips on the correct use of punctuation, including:

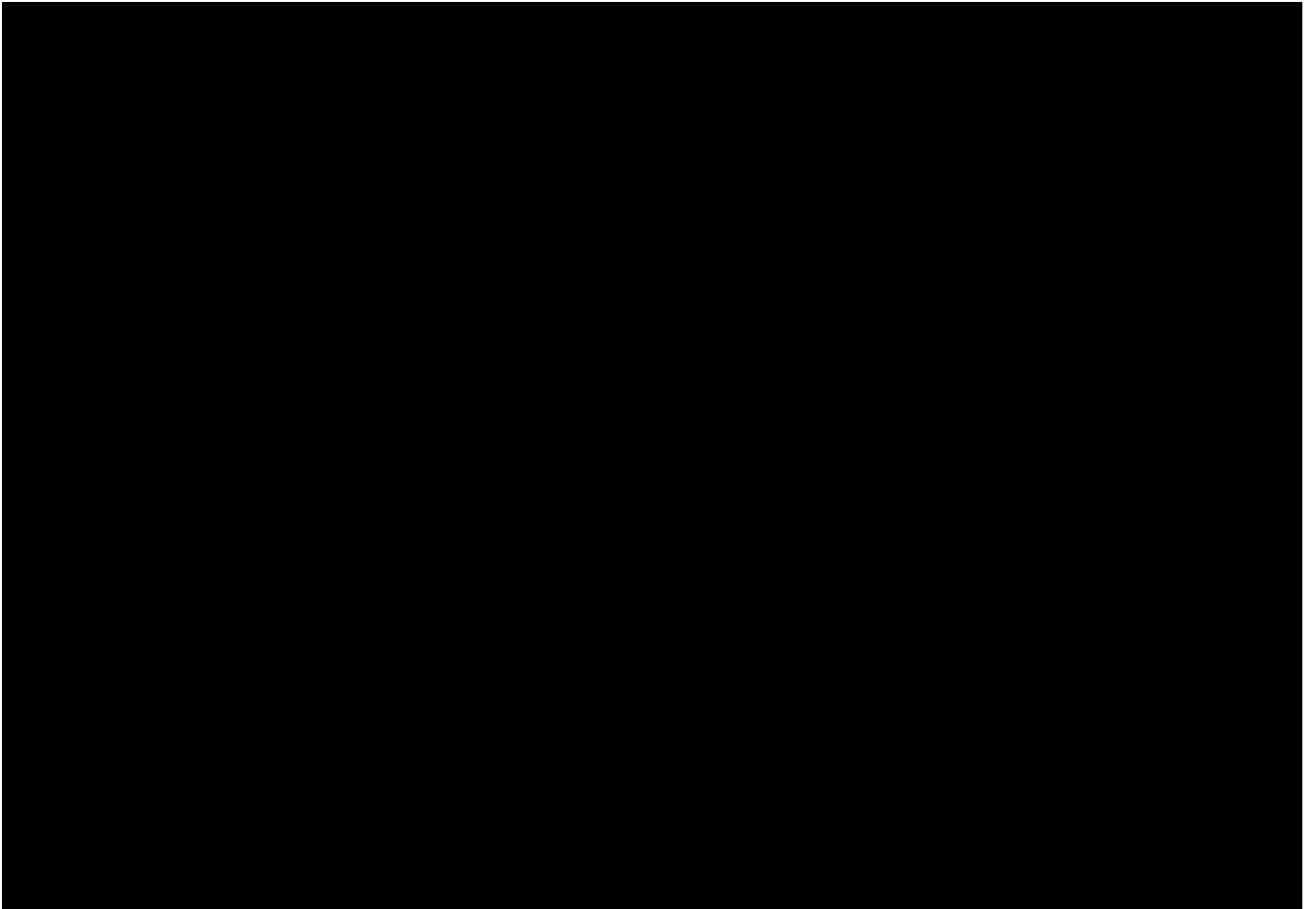
- [Commas](#): Commas separate parts of a sentence so the meaning is clear. Sentence structure determines their correct use
- [Semi-colons](#): Should only be used sparingly and should never be used at the end of bullet or numbered lists. Short, simple sentences are easier to read. Overusing semicolons makes writing more difficult to understand
- [Quotation marks](#): Double quotation marks aren't Australian Government style. Use them only for quotations within quotations.



Other guidance







Word bank and glossary

About this guide

This glossary provides an overview of the key terms, phrases and common words used in communications created for internal or external use by WGEA.

WGEA employees should use it as a guide and checklist when communicating and in the process of developing written materials.

This section includes:

- [common words](#)
- [useful terms and phrases](#)
- [other useful tips for Agency communications](#)
- [standard definitions](#) (a list of agreed definitions for WGEA-specific terms i.e. terms that are specific to
- [further reading](#).



Common words

Word	Rule
advisor	Not adviser
'any' or 'a' woman	Not 'a single woman' e.g. not '60% of companies don't have a single woman on their board.' Instead, say '60% of companies don't have any women on their board.'
Australian OR Federal Government	Refer to the national government of Australia as the Australian or Federal Government. Use an initial capital for both words only when they occur together. Do not use Commonwealth Government. The correct term is Commonwealth of Australia. <i>Note: Please also see 'Commonwealth public sector'</i>
Board	Instead of referring to 'board' use the term 'the Board'. Capitalise the 'B' of 'Board' to clearly define its usage as a noun when referring to a specific Board.
childcare	One word (except when referring to the act of undertaking child care)
Commonwealth public sector	Only capitalise the 'C'
Commonwealth entities and companies	Do not capitalise the 'e' for entities or 'c' for companies when using these words to describe a 'Commonwealth entity' or a 'Commonwealth company'. This is in line with the form used on the PGPA Flipchart .
Corporate Commonwealth entity	Capitalise the 'C' for Corporate and Commonwealth. Do not capitalise the 'e' for entity.
dataset	Do not use the term 'dataset' to refer to the information WGEA collects from employers. Instead, always use the term 'results' or information. Remember they are people, not numbers. When using the term generally to describe a set of numbers, 'dataset' should be one word (i.e. not 'data set')
e.g.	Do not use 'e.g.' and 'i.e.' interchangeably – they mean different things. 'E.g.' means <i>exempli gratia</i> or 'for example'. It is used to introduce examples and illustrate a statement. The terms 'i.e.' and 'e.g.' need full stops after each letter. This helps screen readers announce them. See the APS Style Guide webpage on 'Latin shortened forms' for more advice on this.
e-learning	Should be hyphenated. Not 'elearning'
email	One word. Not hyphenated e.g. 'e-mail'

Word	Rule
'employees' and 'employers'	<p>Use employees and employers. Avoid jargon in external communications when referring to relevant employers required to report to WGEA under the Act. Following the first reference, it's acceptable to drop the word 'relevant' and refer to 'employers.'</p> <p>Use 'employers', not 'customers', 'clients' or 'staff'.</p> <p>Use 'employee' in all communications, particularly formal reports and papers. 'Worker' is acceptable only in informal communications. In general, avoid the term 'organisations' unless absolutely necessary as a substitute.</p>
equal pay	Use the phrase 'equal pay'. Do not use the phrase 'pay equity'
evidence-informed	Use the phrase 'evidence-informed' instead of 'evidence-based'
Federal Parliament	Both 'F' and 'P' should be capitalised
full-time	Hyphenate this term. Not 'full time' or 'fulltime'
gender-balanced	A workforce or a workplace is considered to have achieved 'gender-balance' when it is composed at least 40% of women and 40% of men.
gender bias	Two words. Do not hyphenate
gender pay gap	Refer to the 'gender pay gap', not the 'gender wage gap'. Never use an abbreviation (e.g. GPG unless preparing Senate Estimates briefs)
help	NOT 'to assist'
'how to' guide	Not how-to guide or 'how-to' guide
i.e.	<p>Do not use 'e.g.' and 'i.e.' interchangeably – they mean different things. 'i.e.' means <i>id est</i> or 'that is'. It is used to clarify the statement before it.</p> <p>The terms 'i.e.' and 'e.g.' need full stops after each letter. This helps screen readers announce them. See the APS Style Guide webpage on 'Latin shortened forms' for more advice on this.</p>
mixed-gender	<p>Do not use the term 'mixed-gender' to identify an industry. Instead, always use the term (hyphenated) 'gender-balanced'.</p> <p>Please see above definition for 'gender-balanced' for more on this.</p>
named as non-compliant list	<p>The correct name for the list WGEA publishes naming relevant employers who did not submit a gender equality report on time.</p> <p>The word 'named' is important as not all employers who failed to submit a report on time are named by the Agency. For this reason, do not shorten to 'non-compliant list.'</p> <p>When referring to the employers named on this list always use the phrase 'named as non-compliant.'</p>
Non-corporate Commonwealth entity	Capitalise the 'N' but not the 'c' in Non-corporate. Capitalise the 'C' for Commonwealth. Do not capitalise the 'e' for entity.
Parliament of Australia	Do not use. See 'Federal Parliament'



Word	Rule
part-time	Hyphenate use of this term. Not 'part time' worker or 'parttime'
pay / remuneration / earnings	<p>Can be used interchangeably depending on the audience.</p> <p>Remuneration should be used for business and regulatory audiences, pay/earnings for general public.</p> <p><i>Check spelling for remuneration is correct.</i> Renumeration is a word so it will not come up on spell check.</p>
peers	Use instead of 'competitors'
per cent	<p>Spelled as two words. The use of the symbol is preferred in most instances and should be used alongside a numerical value.</p> <p>Always quote percentage values to one decimal place, except in instances where the decimal place is zero.</p>
percentage points	<p>Per cent means one hundredth of something. Percentage point is used when comparing percentages to one another.</p> <p>For example, 'the gender pay gap for 2022 is 22.8%. Between 2014 and 2022, the gender pay gap fell by 5.8 percentage points.'</p> <p>When appropriate, abbreviate to 'pp'. Do not use 'p.p.'</p>
Pty Ltd	Avoid jargon in communications unless absolutely necessary for accuracy or clarity. Avoid using 'Pty Ltd' in all forms, including 'Proprietary. Ltd.' or 'Pty Limited'
reporting organisation	Do not use the phrase 'reporting organisation' when referring to the employers that report to WGEA. Instead, identify them as 'relevant employers' in the first instance. The word 'relevant' may be dropped after the first use to identify these organisations as 'employers'.
results	Always refer to the information that WGEA collects from employers as 'results'. (i.e. 'WGEA's results', never 'WGEA's dataset')
roadmap	One word – not two (i.e. not road map)
underpaid	Do not hyphenate (i.e. do not use 'under-paid')
under-representation	Ensure to hyphenate this term (i.e. not 'underrepresentation')
under-represented	Ensure to hyphenate this term (i.e. not 'underrepresented')
undervaluation	Do not hyphenate (i.e. not 'under-valuation')
undervalued	Do not hyphenate (i.e. not 'under-valued')
utilised	Use the word 'used' instead



Word	Rule
WGEA (the Agency)	<p>The Workplace Gender Equality Agency</p> <p>In formal communications, use the acronym after the first full mention of the Agency. Indicate this is the intention with the clarifying phrase: <i>the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA)</i>. Once you have clarified this term all subsequent references should be 'the Agency' or 'WGEA'.</p> <p><i>Exceptions for digital communications:</i> Use 'WGEA' in headlines for pages on the website. Digital and social media should use 'WGEA', unless there's a need to use the term 'the Agency'.</p>
women and men	<p>Don't say 'male and female'.</p> <p>The only exception to this is when referring to the composition of a workforce where the terms 'male-dominated', 'female-dominated' and 'gender-balanced' may be used.</p> <p>See the section for Useful Terms & Phrases for definitions of each of these terms.</p>
'women-dominated' and 'men-dominated'	<p>May be used instead of 'female-dominated' or 'male-dominated' in formal WGEA research papers and documents.</p> <p>However, do not use them interchangeably. Choose one set of terms (either women-dominated / men-dominated OR female-dominated / male-dominated) and use the terms consistently throughout the document.</p>
work-life balance	<p>This is a blinking word which means that it's more confusing, than descriptive.</p> <p>This phrase is frequently used in conversation, but is subjective and open to wide interpretation which means it may be misunderstood. Never use this phrase in WGEA communications. Be clear and concise in all communications.</p>
Write the words zero and one	<p>Spell out the name of the number. Do not use numerals 0 and 1.</p> <p>WGEA's use of numerals aligns with the APS Style Guide advice on 'Choosing numerals or words'. This webpage also provides advice on exceptions to the rule.</p> <p>See 'Appendix 1' for more advice on use of numbers.</p>
Use numerals for 2,3,4,5,6,7,8 and 9	<p>Always use numerals. Don't spell out the name of the number.</p> <p>More advice on the APS Style Guide webpage 'Choosing numerals or words'.</p>



Useful terms and phrases

Term/phrase	Rule
100 or more employees	<p>In reference to relevant employers that are required to report to WGEA under the <i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i>. By using this clarifying statement, it defines that WGEA communications apply to employers with 100 or more employees and avoids confusion for small business.</p> <p>Write '100 or more', never 'more than 100.'</p> <p>See 'relevant employer' in the section for 'Standard definitions' for more guidance.</p>
2021 Review of the WGE Act, the 2021 WGEA Review or WGEA Review	<p>In reference to the 2021 Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</p>
500 or more employees	<p>In reference to designated relevant employers covered in Recommendation 3.1a of the 2021 Review.</p> <p>This recommendation will require relevant employers with 500 or more employees (designated relevant employers) to commit to, achieve, and report to WGEA on measurable targets to improve gender equality in their workplace against 3 of the 6 GEIs.</p>
'Actions taken to prevent sexual harassment, harassment on the ground of sex or discrimination in the workplace'	<p>Note that 'Actions' is always plural, not one singular action and that we do not say 'grounds'. This is a legal term and is what is in the Act.</p> <p>The term 'work-related sexual harassment' should be used to shorten this phrase.</p>
annualised full-time equivalent earnings	<p>Do not use 'full-time equivalent annual remuneration' when discussing how WGEA calculates the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Instead say: <i>WGEA's gender pay gap calculation includes full-time, part-time and casual employees (converted into annualised full-time equivalent earnings).</i></p>
Appendix 1	<p>Use the numerical value when labelling the Appendix. Do not spell out the number (i.e. '1' not 'One')</p>
Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO)	<p>Note that each word has the first letter capitalised, except 'and' and 'of'</p>
Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC)	<p>Note that each word has the first letter capitalised, except 'and'</p>



Term/phrase	Rule
'average woman', 'average man'	Avoid using these terms to shorten the explanation of gender pay gaps. Instead, phrase it similar to: 'on average, women earn XX cents for every \$1 a man earns'.
Base salary average gender pay gap / total remuneration average gender pay gap	This is the correct form of words to use when describing what WGEA will publish for employers relating to their average gender pay gap
Base salary median gender pay gap / total remuneration median gender pay gap	This is the correct form of words to use when describing what WGEA will publish for employers relating to their median gender pay gap
CEO, Head of Business, and Casual Manager remuneration	Casual Manager and Head of Business remuneration needs to be included with CEO remuneration. It's okay to short-hand to CEO remuneration after the first mention of all three. Note the capitalisation on these roles.
designated relevant employer	This term is specific to Recommendation 3.1a of the WGEA Review (WGEA target setting). This is the term for relevant employers with 500 or more employees that will be required to commit to, achieve, and report to WGEA on measurable genuine targets to improve gender equality in their workplace against 3 of the 6 GEIs.
employee organisations	Use the term 'employee organisations'. Do not use the term 'unions'
'employer/s' or 'relevant employer/s'	Use the term 'employers' when referring to those required to report to WGEA. Only use 'organisation' where absolutely necessary. Avoid the use of these terms: 'business', 'companies' or 'firms'. This is because a range of entities, such as educational institutions, charities and non-public sector organisations, report to WGEA.
employer gender pay gaps	Instead of 'employer level gender pay gaps.' Never use abbreviations (e.g. GPG) always spell out the words in full. Note: The only exception to this is in briefing documents for Senate Estimates when the abbreviation 'GPG' should be used.
Employer Statement	When referring to the voluntary statement employers can provide to explain their gender pay gap
'Employers can provide any context or insights related to their gender pay gap and actions they are taking to address it'	To describe the 'Employer Statement' This is the document containing the context that employers can provide alongside their employer gender pay gap published on WGEA's Data Explorer.

Term/phrase	Rule
'Employers with 500 or more employees must have a policy or strategy for each of the 6 gender equality indicators'	Not 'for all' or 'covering'
'enhancements' or 'expansion' to publishing employer gender pay gaps	Do not use the word 'changes' when describing the additional measures of the gender pay gap and data points on employee remuneration that WGEA will publish at the second round of employer gender pay gaps. Instead, use the terms 'expansion' or 'enhancement'
'Executive Summary' and 'Industry Benchmark Report'	Executive Summary has no 'report' on the end. Remember to capitalise. Always Industry Benchmark Report. NEVER Industry Benchmark Reports with an 's' on the end.
female-dominated / women-dominated	WGEA classifies industries where 60% or more of the employees in the workforce are women as 'female-dominated' or 'women-dominated' Note: To maintain consistency, please only use one of these terms in a document. Do not use them interchangeably. Women-dominated is the preference.
flexible working arrangements	Not flexible 'work' arrangements
gender composition and average remuneration per pay quartile	Use these terms when talking about remuneration quartiles. Note: In February 2024, WGEA only published employer gender pay gaps by <i>gender composition per pay quartile</i> . At the second round of publishing, WGEA will publish <i>gender composition and average remuneration per pay quartile</i> .
gender equality indicators	Use capitals only when referring to the Legislative Instrument. No capitals for general use Always spell out the first reference in full. After that point, it may be abbreviated to 'GEI' or 'GEIs'. Note the lower case 's' in the plural abbreviation. When referencing a specific GEI, do not add a space between the letters and number (i.e. GEI3, not GEI 3)
Gender Equality Reporting	Where possible use the term Gender Equality Reporting to distinguish from end of year financial reporting. Do not call it 'compliance reporting.' Ensure Gender Equality Reporting is capitalised.
Gender Equality Standards	No hyphenation Do not call them 'minimum standards' as they have been renamed



Term/phrase	Rule
male-dominated / men-dominated	<p>WGEA classifies industries where 60% or more of the employees in the workforce are men as 'male-dominated' / 'men-dominated'</p> <p>Note: To maintain consistency, please only use one of these terms in a document. Do not use them interchangeably. Men-dominated is the preference.</p>
'mandatory' reporting or 'required' reporting	Avoid using the term 'mandatory' in reference to the requirement of private sector or Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees to report to WGEA. Reduce use of the term 'required', where possible. Instead, use phrasing similar to: '...employers who reported to WGEA...'
new reporting questions	Always say <i>new</i> reporting questions <u>not</u> <i>more</i> mandatory reporting questions
'non-compliant' and 'non-compliance'	Use of these terms should use hyphenation
'non-public sector' or 'private sector' employers	Avoid jargon whenever possible. Do not use the term 'non-public sector' when referring to employers who must report to WGEA. Instead, refer to 'private sector' employers
pay gap analysis	<p>Instead of 'pay gap audit' or 'compensation analysis' use the terms 'pay gap analysis' or 'gender pay gap analysis'</p> <p>When using in a sentence, use words similar to employers 'analysing their payroll'</p>
'public service' or 'public sector'	<p>The terms 'public service' and the 'public sector' are not interchangeable.</p> <p>In law, the Australian Public Service (APS) comprises only those entities employing staff under the Public Service Act 1999. The public sector includes public service and non-public service entities (entities that are not covered by the APSC).</p> <p>The Parliament of Australia defines the Australian government public sector in the Parliamentary Library Briefing Book.</p>
publishing gender pay gaps	Instead of 'gender pay gap transparency.' Avoid use of the word transparency
publishing employer gender pay gaps	<p>Add the word employer when speaking specifically about employer gender pay gaps. WGEA will publish the 2024 employer gender pay gaps in early 2025.</p> <p>Add 'Commonwealth public sector' when specifically speaking about employer gender pay gaps for Commonwealth public sector employers.</p>



Term/phrase	Rule
relevant employer	<p>Never 'individual company ABN' or 'company ABN'. This is because employers with multiple businesses that have similar gender equality policies can choose to register multiple ABNs to report as a group. Therefore, not all employers are an 'individual' ABN.</p> <p>See the 'list of agreed definitions' below for WGEA's definition of a 'relevant employer'</p>
reporting period (reference to specific year i.e. '2022-23 reporting')	<p>Always refer to both years an employer's report relates to when describing private sector reporting.</p> <p>Always hyphenate the years. Never use a forward slash (i.e. /) between years. The second year is referenced by its last two figures only.</p>
reporting resources	<p>Use concise terminology instead of saying 'reporting-related' resources (an example of a reporting resource is WGEA's Reporting Guide in the Employer Portal)</p>
report submission period	<p>Not 'reporting' submission period</p>
standalone company	<p>A standalone company is a single ABN employer that has no parent entity and no subsidiaries.</p>
submission group	<p>Some corporate groups with multiple businesses choose to report to WGEA as a 'submission group'.</p> <p>Note that submission group cannot be used interchangeably with 'corporate group'.</p> <p>When defining a 'submission group' use the words: <i>'Most companies reporting to WGEA are single businesses. However, a proportion are corporate groups with multiple businesses. 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.'</i></p>
'target range' or 'optimal' gender pay gap within and including +/-5%	<p>Do not say 'neutral' gender pay gap. A gender pay gap result within and including 5% to -5% should be described as a 'target range' or 'optimal' gender pay gap. In formal documents and charts the numerical values may abbreviated to 'within and including +/-5%'.</p> <p>It should be defined as: <i>'A gender pay gap within and including +/-5% allows for normal business fluctuations and employee movements, while signifying that an employer has a strong focus on gender equality and is taking action to show that there is gender equality in the organisation.'</i></p>
target setting OR setting targets	<p>Use the term 'target setting', not 'setting targets', when referring to Recommendation 3.1a of the WGEA Review.</p> <p>The term 'setting targets' should be use when discussing actions employers can take to improve gender equality in their organisation. (e.g. organisational KPIs or a measurable objective for the proportion of women in leadership).</p>



Term/phrase	Rule
an employer's self-calculated gender pay gap	Referring to employer gender pay gaps not calculated by WGEA
From 1 April 2024	When referring to what employers will report to WGEA in the 2023-24 reporting period



Other useful tips for Agency communications

	Rule
'generous' paid parental leave	<p>DO NOT use the term 'generous' in relation to employer's offering parental leave.</p> <p>Parental leave is not 'generous.' It's not charity, it is an industrial provision designed recompensate parents for time away from work for care. Either refrain from using a qualifier or perhaps 'comprehensive access to'.</p>
Hyperlinks	<p>Always provide hyperlinks in-text. Do not use the URL.</p> <p>Write link text that makes the destination clear. Links like 'click here' or 'more information' don't give the user any information about the destination. Match the content on the linked page so the user knows they have reached the right place.</p> <p>More guidance is available under 'Links' in the APS Style Manual.</p>
'legislative reforms' or 'The Act together with the remade Legislative Instruments'	<p>Use 'legislative reforms,' never just 'The Act' on its own. Legislative Instruments should be capitalised</p>
'Men are less likely than women to take primary carer's leave. Women account for 87% of all paid primary carer's leave taken and men account for 13%.'	<p>Be mindful of language when writing about men's uptake of parental leave. The '13%' is NOT the per cent of men who take paid parental leave.</p> <p>The correct phrase is: <i>'13% of paid parental leave taken is by men.'</i></p> <p>Table 14 of WGEA's 2022 Gender Equality Scorecard is an example of the correct use of terms that relate to this measure of gender equality.</p>
'On average, women earn XX cents for every \$1 a man earns.'	<p>Use simple terms to reflect the cost of the gender pay gap. Where appropriate, use dollars to illustrate the financial implications, rather than the per cent figure.</p> <p>E.g. In 2023, a gender pay gap of 21.7% means that <i>'on average, women earn 78 cents for every \$1 a man earns. Over a year, that adds up to a difference of \$26,400.'</i></p>



Rule	
Parliamentary processes	<p>For naming conventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The <i>Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012</i> should be ‘the Act’ • The <i>Workplace Gender Equality (Closing the Gender Pay Gap) Act 2023</i> should be ‘the amending Act’ <p>A Bill is a proposal for a new law or a change to an existing one. A Bill becomes a law if it is passed in identical form by both the House of Representatives and the Senate, and given Royal Assent by the Governor-General. It is then known as an Act of Parliament.</p> <p>Never refer to the ‘passage of a Bill’. Once a Bill is passed, use the term ‘passage of an/the Act’.</p> <p>The Australian Senate has further advice on the passage of legislation and the correct use of terminology related to this process.</p>
‘The first publication of Commonwealth public sector employer gender pay gaps in early 2025 will be based on employer reports for the period 1 January to 31 December 2023.’	<p>This is the correct language for when and how WGEA will publish Commonwealth public sector employer gender pay gaps.</p> <p>Note that this information is from the second year of public sector reporting in 2024. This refers to gender equality reports submitted between 1 September to 31 October 2024. These reports relate to the workforce in the 2023 calendar year (between 1 January 2023-31 December 2023).</p>
‘The gender pay gap is the difference in average or median earnings between women and men in the workforce.’	<p>When describing the gender pay gap.</p> <p>Note this definition includes a reference to ‘average or median’. This is deliberate because of how WGEA publishes employer gender pay gaps.</p>
‘WGEA published private sector employer gender pay gaps for the first time in February 2024. This covered the 2022-23 reporting period.’	<p>This is the correct language for when WGEA will publish employer gender pay gaps. Note that we say ‘reporting period’, not ‘reporting’.</p> <p>As WGEA will publish results for the private sector and public sector at different times each year, be as specific as possible. Note the date that employer gender pay gaps were published to distinguish between WGEA’s publication of private sector and public sector results.</p>
‘WGEA will publish the second round of private sector employer gender pay gaps in early 2025. This will include an expansion of the data published.’	<p>When explaining the second round of private sector employer gender pay gaps.</p> <p>Do not use the word ‘changes’ when describing the additional measures that WGEA will publish. Instead, describe these as ‘expansions’ or ‘enhancements.’</p>



Rule

Work
towards/progress
towards closing the
gender pay gap...

OR ...help accelerate
employer action to
close the gender pay
gap.

Don't over-promise! We support and help employers to do it – we don't do it ourselves.



Standard definitions

Standard definitions	Agreed definition
average gender pay gap	<p>The average gender pay gap is calculated by adding up the wages of all employees and dividing that number by the number of employees.</p> <p>The average gender pay gap is a good measure of the collective remuneration of a group. As the average is skewed by exceptionally high or low salaries, it will show if earnings are particularly concentrated for one gender, for example, more men in higher earning positions.</p>
equal pay	<p>Use the definition: 'Equal pay is where employees are paid the same for performing the same work or different work of equal or comparable value. In Australia, this has been a legal requirement since 1969.'</p> <p>Refer to 'employees', do not use the terms 'women' and 'men' or discuss in terms of 'roles'. This definition aligns with Fair Work Australia. Further reading is available on the FWA website.</p>
Executive Summary	<p>The Executive Summary sets out the key results from an employer's submission to WGEA's annual Gender Equality Reporting. This Summary can help employers understand and analyse the current state of gender equality in their organisation.</p>
gender composition and average remuneration per pay quartile	<p>This is the proportion of women and men in an organisation and the average total remuneration for each pay quartile.</p> <p>Pay quartiles divide the women and men who work at an organisation into four groups, starting with the highest paid people in an organisation down to the lowest paid. We then indicate the average total remuneration per pay quartile.</p>
gender pay gap	<p>The gender pay gap is the difference in the average or median earnings between women and men across organisations, industries and the workforce as a whole.</p> <p><i>Additional words to use when it's necessary to further define the gender pay gap:</i> Where one gender earns more, on average, than another, this can point to issues with structural inequality.</p> <p>It's important to note, the gender pay gap is not the same as equal pay. Equal pay is where employees are paid the same for performing the same work or different work of equal or comparable value. In Australia, this has been a legal requirement since 1969. Unequal pay can be one of the drivers of the gender pay gap, but there are many others that should be thoughtfully considered.</p>
Industry Benchmark Report	<p>The Industry Benchmark Report compares an employer's results to the results of other peers. This Report helps employers understand how their workplace compares to industry peers.</p>

Standard definitions	Agreed definition
median gender pay gap	<p>A 'median' is the middle of a set of numbers.</p> <p>A median gender pay gap is found by lining up the pay of every man in a business in order of smallest to largest and finding the middle number in that dataset. The same is done for the pay of women in that business. A median employer gender pay gap is the difference between the median of what a man is paid and the median of what a woman is paid within the organisation.</p> <p>Unlike the average, the median is not skewed by extreme values (CEO remuneration, for example), giving us a picture of typical earnings that exist within an organisation.</p>
'relevant employer' (private sector)	<p>Under the Act, employers with 100 or more employees are 'relevant employers' and are required to report to WGEA. However, the Act also allows for fluctuations in the workforce. This means that employers must continue to submit a gender equality report to WGEA until their workforce falls below 80 employees.</p> <p>A 'relevant employer' can be a standalone company, a corporate group, or a subsidiary of a corporate group. An employer's ABN is used to determine the number of employees.</p>
'relevant employer' (Commonwealth public sector)	<p>Commonwealth public sector employers with 100 or more employees are required to report to WGEA. The legislation defines a relevant employer according to the categories under the Public Governance, Performance and Accountability Act (PGPA Act).</p> <p><i>[Note: Additional words below for use in formal communications when a specific definition is required].</i></p> <p>This includes the following employer types:</p> <p>Corporate entity: A Corporate entity is a body corporate that has a separate legal personality from the Commonwealth and can act in its own right exercising certain legal rights such as entering into contracts and owning property.</p> <p>Non-corporate entity: Non-corporate Commonwealth entities are legally and financially part of the Commonwealth.</p> <p>Company: Commonwealth companies are companies that are established under the Commonwealth under the Corporations Act 2001 and are wholly controlled by the Commonwealth.</p> <p>The PGPA flip chart provides a list of these employers.</p>

Standard definitions	Agreed definition
a gender pay gap in the target range within and including +/-5%	<p>We recognise that the gender pay gap is a good proxy but not a perfect measure of gender equality and the gender make up of a company fluctuates.</p> <p>A gender pay gap within and including +/-5% allows for normal business fluctuations and employee movements, while signifying that an employer has a strong focus on gender equality and is taking action to show that there is gender equality in the organisation.</p>

Further reading

Advice for written communications

- APS Style Guide www.stylemanual.gov.au
- Fair Work Australia [definition of 'equal pay'](#)
- WGEA's brand guidelines: Contact Azelia Maynard, Design & Communications Adviser, at azelia.maynard@wgea.gov.au
- APS advice for [accessible and inclusive content](#)
- For more advice on making content accessible, refer directly to the [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines](#).

Essential reading

WGEA's most recent research reports and communications guides

WGEA resources

- [WGEA website](#)
- explore gender equality outcomes for industries, industry sub-divisions, groups of employers by size and individual employers on the [WGEA Data Explorer](#)
- current [private sector Gender Equality Scorecard](#) (released November 2024)
- current [Commonwealth public sector Gender Equality Scorecard](#) (released June 2024)
- current [Employer Gender Pay Gaps Snapshot](#) (released February 2024)
- read more about the drivers of the gender pay gap and the economic cost to the Australian economy in [She's Price\(d\)less](#) (released July 2022)
- final report of the [2021 Review of the Workplace Gender Equality Act](#) (completed December 2021).

External resources

Australian Government's [Working for Women: A Strategy for Gender Equality](#)

WGEA reporting resources

- learn about the requirements for relevant employers that report to WGEA and the process for reporting in the [Reporting Guide on the Employer Portal](#)
- Private sector [Executive Summary and Industry Benchmark Report](#) guides
- Commonwealth public sector [Industry Benchmark Report guide](#).

