



1. Are the functions and powers of WGEA appropriate for promoting and improving gender equality in the workplace? How effective is WGEA in achieving its functions to promote and improve gender equality in the workplace including by enabling relevant employers to report on the gender equality indicators, developing benchmarks and reports, undertaking research, education and leading practice programs and contributing to the public discussion on gender equality?

The functions and goals of WGEA are laudable. As the 2021 Gender Equity Insights report found, however, the results in closing the gender pay gap and putting women on boards is somewhat mixed - for companies that regularly audit gender pay, there is more success in closing the pay gap. In the 2020-21 period, however, possibly because of the impact COVID has had on businesses, this has been less common and as a result progress here has slowed.

Similarly, there seems to be limited success for companies that introduce quotas for female board members with limited ambition beyond 30%. Nevertheless, companies who do set board quotas have significantly more success in this area than companies who do not.

WGEA, to summarise, is as successful as the individual companies are willing to make it - beyond annual reporting requirements, there are few actual mandates, and fewer still consequences for not doing so. This is not to say the program is unimportant though - the very act of non-compliance is revealing, as are the reports, even of companies who are fairly apathetic as to the subject matter.

