

Senate Standing Committee on Education and Employment

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE Supplementary Budget Estimates 2015 - 2016

Agency - Workplace Gender Equality Agency

Department of Employment Question No. EMSQ15-000305

Senator Reynolds asked on 22 October 2015 on proof Hansard page 46

Question

WGEA – The ‘Equilibrium Man’ and ‘In Your Hands’ programmes

Senator REYNOLDS: If I could just ask you to take on notice to get some further information, because what you are doing I think is really important and I would like to understand how the whole process works. Could you take on notice for me a bit more information about the Equilibrium Man and also the In Your Hands program in terms of how it is funded and what the strategy is behind it, so how each of those links into the four categories you said—awareness, leadership, capability building and action—then how you measure success and how all of that links into your corporate strategy?

Answer

Background and rationale

The Workplace Gender Equality Agency's (WGEA/Agency) decision to develop a pay equity campaign reflected the legislative focus on equal remuneration between women and men and the House of Representatives report *Making it fair – pay equity and associated issues related to increasing female participation in the workforce*. This report highlighted priority areas for WGEA including research and benchmarks on pay equity, and educational tools and resources on pay equity.

Qualitative evidence gathered through conversations with HR contacts within reporting organisations and a targeted number of leading CEOs revealed most employers don't set out to pay women less but that unconscious bias can impact pay and related decisions unless you conduct a gender pay gap analysis and take action.

Strategy

This insight underpinned our campaign and creative strategy, that is, we needed:

- Raise awareness of how gender bias impact pay
- Leverage the voice of leaders who were already doing great work in this area while creating a platform to talk more openly about their efforts
- Build the capability within workplaces to address pay equity issues through practical tools and resources co-created with employers, including best practice case studies
- Drive a clear and measurable call to action: conduct a gender pay gap analysis and take action

How is success measured?

Our success against these strategic pillars is summarized below:

KPI	Metric	Result as at 30 Sept 2015
Awareness	Views to key web pages (about and addressing pay equity)	15,079
	Unique views of campaign video	72,744
	Unique views of 'understand the gender pay gap' video	11,777
Leadership	Number of pay equity ambassadors	85
	Number of official supporters	26
	CEO roundtables held	4
	CEO roundtables scheduled	6
	CEO roundtables yet to be scheduled	9
	Procurement Principles – indicative interest	9 orgs
Capability building	Tool downloads	5,250
Action	Conducted a GPG analysis	26.3% (up from 24%)
	Took action following analysis	51% (up from 46%)
	Set pay equity objectives in rem policy	25.6% (up from 18.1%)

Budgets and funding

Pay Equity – In Your Hands	
Agency Funds Used – Creative Strategy and Execution	\$ 29,700
Sponsorship Monies from Various Stakeholders	\$116,000
Sub-total - Payments	\$145,700
In Kind Support - Creative Strategy	\$110,000
Total value of campaign	\$245,700

Note that additional in kind support and Agency funds were used in the development of educational tools and resources for Pay Equity.

Link to corporate strategy

How the campaign supports the Agency's corporate strategy is explained below:

Strategic priority	Campaign integration
Proactively support and add value to employers as they seek to achieve gender equality in their workplaces	Suite of best practice tools and resources
Position the Agency as the leader in the workplace gender equality space	Thought the campaign, the Agency has transformed the way employers talk about pay equity. A previously taboo topic is now talked about publicly as evidenced by the growing number of Pay Equity Ambassadors.
Collaborate strategically with other organisations to advance workplace gender equality	The educational tools and resources and campaign strategy and creative were co-created with employers and then the campaign was executed with the support of official supporters. These supporters included professional, industry and business peak bodies.
Develop the evidence base through reporting and quality data	The campaign added to the knowledge base about best practice pay equity approaches, which were then incorporated into the 2014-15 reporting questionnaire, adding to the evidence base on employer approaches to addressing pay equity.

Equilibrium Man Challenge / WGEA flexibility strategy

Background and rationale

Flexibility is recognised as a critical structural enabler for gender equality in workplaces. The *Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012* directs the WGEA to support employers in improving against gender equality indicators, which includes supporting employees with flexible working arrangements (gender equality indicator number 4).

While access to flexible work positively contributes to female workforce participation,¹ women who work flexibly often suffer a career and pay penalty, or find themselves under-employed because they are unable to find work that precisely matches their employment capacity² in terms of available hours to work³. Similarly, a lack of quality flexible work often results in women leaving the workforce for significant periods of time, resulting in a loss of skills and networks that are difficult to rebuild, contributing to the national gender pay gap and the female poverty in retirement rate⁴.

Access to quality flexible work is increasingly becoming a men's issue too. Research by the Diversity Council of Australia⁵ found having the flexibility to manage family and personal life

¹Executive Office of the President of the United States Council of Economic Advisers, 2010, Work-Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/100331-cea-economics-workplace-flexibility.pdf>>

² Skinner, N & Pocock, B (Centre for Work and Life, University of South Australia) 2014, The Persistent Challenge: Living, Working and Caring in Australia in 2014. The Australian Work and Life Index, p. 24, <http://www.unisa.edu.au/Documents/EASS/CWL/Publications/AWALI_2014_national_report_final.pdf>

³ ABS 2014, Job Search Experience, Australia, July 2013 cat. no. 6222.0ABS, Canberra.

⁴ Poynton, A & Rolland, L (EY), Untapped opportunity: The role of women in unlocking Australia's productivity potential July 2013, p.5, viewed 10 December 2014, <[https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/EY-\(2013\)-Untapped-opportunity-The-role-of-women-in-unlocking-Australias-productivity-potential.pdf](https://www.wgea.gov.au/sites/default/files/EY-(2013)-Untapped-opportunity-The-role-of-women-in-unlocking-Australias-productivity-potential.pdf)>; ABS 2013, Gender Indicators, Australia, Jan 2013, cat. no. 4125.0, ABS, Canberra.

⁵ Diversity Council Australia 2012, Men Get Flexible! Mainstreaming Flexible Work in Australian Business,

is one of the five most highly valued job characteristics for men. In fact, 18 per cent of all men and 29 per cent of men under the age of 35 have seriously considered leaving their organisation because of a lack of flexibility. In addition, the 2012 Australian Work and Life Index survey found that men were more likely than women to have a flexibility request declined.

While public expectations are changing, extensive research now suggests flexibility can be a key driver of workforce productivity by lifting employee engagement, reducing absenteeism and driving discretionary effort⁶.

These factors combined with changes to legislation—in particular the right to request flexibility in the *Fair Work Act 2008*—have contributed to a growing focus by employers to facilitate flexible working. In fact, 47.7 per cent of employers who report to the WGEA now have a policy to support flexible working arrangements. However, a policy alone will not drive the uptake of flexible working, which is still laden with stigma around perceptions of career commitment. Because flexible working represents a significant departure of current working styles for most workplaces, and there is a range of capabilities organisations need to master to enable effective flexible working, the development and implementation of a flexible working strategy is an essential step for most employers to make if they are to generate widespread adoption of quality flexible working arrangements that also yield the performance and productivity benefits.

In this respect, employers have some way to travel, as only 13.7 per cent of organisations that report to the WGEA have a strategy relating to flexible working arrangements.

Strategy

The WGEA flexibility program aims to encourage and support employers to develop a flexible working strategy that aims to mainstream flexible working. While the Equilibrium Man Challenge is the critical awareness initiative it is supported, and it supports a number of pillars, initiatives and success metrics, as outlined below. It should be noted that WGEA does not hold the funds nor control the funds for the Equilibrium Man Challenge—we are one of a number of partners with the budget, governance and risk wholly managed by the production manager, Praxis Communication.

Area	Overview	Initiatives	Metrics
Evidence and business case	Articulate the business case for flexibility based on existing research and WGEA data, and develop a toolkit for employers to calculate their own business case	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The business case for flexibility toolkit (in progress) 	Toolkit downloads
Awareness - mindset and behaviour change	Initially leveraging the WGEA’s sponsorship of the Equilibrium Challenge, develop campaigns that uncover and change the attitudinal barriers to flexibility to encourage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equilibrium Man Challenge (in progress) 	Challenge website views Challenge Facebook likes # cheer squad members % of employers which

<<http://www.dca.org.au/app/webroot/files/file/Work-life%20and%20flexibility%20documents/DCA%20Men%20Get%20Flexible%20FINAL%2024%20Aug%202012.pdf>>

⁶ Executive Office of the President of the United States Council of Economic Advisers, 2010, Work–Life Balance and the Economics of Workplace Flexibility, <<http://www.whitehouse.gov/files/documents/100331-cea-economics-workplace-flexibility.pdf>>

Area	Overview	Initiatives	Metrics
	employers to develop flexibility strategies and for employees to adopt flexible working practices.		have developed a flex strategy
Capability building	Develop a business methodology for embedding flexible working across an enterprise Develop a range of tools and resources to help employers adopt a strategic approach to flexibility Partner with learning and education providers to develop a flexibility workshop series	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness assessment (completed) • Flex strategy toolkit (completed) • Executive briefing toolkit (completed) • Manager toolkit (completed) • Employee toolkit (completed) • Strategic partnership for flexibility workshops (not started) 	Toolkit / resource downloads Workshop attendance
Leadership	Provide platforms for leaders to share their commitment to flexible working and inspire others to follow.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equilibrium Challenge cheer squad(in progress) • External events featuring flex leaders (in progress) 	# of external events # cheer squad members
Action (Education)	Encourage employers to develop a flexible working strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the above 	% of employers which have developed a flex strategy

How is success measured?

KPI	Metric	Result as at 30 Sept 2015
Awareness	Website views	27,610
	Social referrals	4,179
	Video views	25,031
Leadership	Number of cheer squad members	34
	Number of external events	3 held 2 scheduled
Capability building	Tool downloads	1,773
Action	Has a flexibility policy	47.6% (13-14) 50% (14-15)
	Has a flexibility strategy	13.7% (13-14) – 14.6% (14-15)

Budgets and funding

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Flexibility – Equilibrium Man	
Agency Funds Used – Concept Development	\$ 28,000
Agency Funds Used – Launch and Promotion	\$ 14,300
Total Cost of Campaign	\$ 42,300

It should be noted that WGEA does not hold the funds nor control the funds for the Equilibrium Man Challenge—we are one of a number of partners with the budget, governance and risk wholly managed by the production manager, Praxis Communication. Telstra and Mirvac each contributed \$250,000 in sponsorship for the execution of the project.

[Link to corporate strategy](#)

How the project supports the Agency’s corporate strategy is explained below:

Strategic priority	Project integration
Proactively support and add value to employers as they seek to achieve gender equality in their workplaces	Suite of best practice tools and resources
Position the Agency as the leader in the workplace gender equality space	Improving access to quality flexible work is a key driver of gender equality and a recent roundtable with gender equality educators confirmed the Equilibrium Man Challenge is the most high profile, long-term campaign currently being run on this important topic.
Collaborate strategically with other organisations to advance workplace gender equality	The educational tools and resources and campaign strategy and creative were co-created with employers and then the campaign was executed with the support of official supporters. These supporters included professional, industry and business peak bodies.
Develop the evidence base through reporting and quality data	The project added to the knowledge base about adopting a strategic approach to flexible working, with plans to incorporate these into the 2015–16 reporting questionnaire, adding to the evidence base on employer approached to flexible working strategies.