

25 January 2013

The Hon Julie Collins MP
Minister for Community Services
Minister for Indigenous Employment and Economic Development
Minister for the Status of Women
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Minister Collins

Thank you for inviting us to comment on the reporting matters for the gender equality indicators relevant to the Workplace Gender Equality Act. As issues of gender equality in the workplace can have important implications for family wellbeing, we are keenly interested in helping to ensure that a meaningful set of indicators is established, and fully appreciate the work that has already been undertaken in developing this comprehensive assessment of possible indicators and measures.

Clearly, the consultation process will be seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders, which will provide opportunities to gain insights from different occupational and industry groups. In providing our comments, we have considered these indicators from the perspective of a research agency, rather than reflecting on issues that may be faced by particular occupations or industries.

The issues paper seeks comment on whether the outcomes sufficiently reflect the intent of the Act, and whether they need amending or expanding. We consider these outcomes appropriate and sufficient as they stand.

Our comments are focused on the priority measurable outcomes in terms of each key objective given our interest in quantitative analysis. The table attached summarises the Institute's comments on the four key objectives that have suggested measurable outcomes.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further in the face-to-face consultation.

Yours sincerely

Professor Alan Hayes AM
Director
Australian Institute of Family Studies

Encl.

**Table: Australian Institute of Family Studies
Comments on measurable outcomes for gender equality indicators**

Priority measurable outcomes	Comment
Improve women's workforce participation	<p>Because of its simplicity, the basic data on the profile of men and women in the workplace are likely to be most valuable.</p> <p>The additional data on recruitment, exits and retention will add value to these data, to be able to better analyse flows into and out of particular jobs for women and men.</p>
Improve representation of women in leadership positions and governing bodies	<p>The information on job classifications by gender is of central importance to issues of women in the workforce, and will be highly relevant to the next outcome regarding remuneration. These data will certainly provide insights regarding women in leadership, as well as about the lower end of the classification system, where job quality may be more problematic. It will be important to ensure that information is analysed as part of any analyses of gender equality in the workplace.</p> <p>With regard to leadership roles, the occupational data will be valuable as they should provide information about whole of organisation roles, across various sites. Other leadership and governance data will be valuable but perhaps provide less insight into the day to day experiences of women in leadership positions when very large organisations (e.g. supermarket chains) are spread over many locations, and perhaps quite removed from the governance structure.</p>
Equal remuneration for work of equal value	All indicators as listed will be useful. The base pay by gender and by occupation will be critical. Data on overtime earnings by gender would also be useful.
Increased flexible working for women and men	<p>Information about part-time and casual workers by gender is key.</p> <p>Information about other types of flexible working may be useful. For example, the gender split of who takes carer leave, given that the Act refers to caring responsibilities, which may include caring for people other than young children.</p>