Use of Single Touch Payroll data

WGEA does not consider the use of Single Touch Payroll (STP) data would reduce employer effort in reporting to WGEA.

At first glance, STP appears to offer an opportunity to reduce reporting by reusing payroll data already provided to government. However, STP was designed as a payroll reporting mechanism rather than a workplace gender equality reporting system. While it contains some information relevant to WGEA reporting, it does not capture many of the workforce, organisational, and governance data elements required to assess performance against the Gender Equality Indicators.

As a result, employers would continue to be required to provide information directly to WGEA. This includes information currently collected through the Questionnaire, Workplace Profile, and Workforce Management Statistics, such as workplace gender equality policies and practices, workforce composition data, workforce movements, governing body information, and other organisational characteristics relevant to gender equality outcomes.

Importantly, accessing STP data would not remove the need for employers to validate and reconcile information. Any data sourced from STP would need to be matched to employer workforce records and aligned with WGEA reporting requirements. This would require employers to verify identifiers, investigate discrepancies, and confirm that STP records accurately reflect their workforce data. In practice, this risks replacing one reporting activity with another rather than delivering a meaningful reduction in effort. Depending on the model adopted, employee-level data matching may also introduce additional privacy considerations and increase complexity for both employers and government agencies.

WGEA's experience with other data-sharing arrangements demonstrates that combining datasets collected for different purposes can create additional complexity for reporting entities. When developing Commonwealth public sector reporting arrangements, WGEA and the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) jointly developed mapping guidance to align Australian Public Service Employment Database (APSED) workforce categories with WGEA Workplace Profile and Workforce Management Statistics requirements. Despite the relatively strong alignment between the two workforce datasets, agencies were still required to provide additional information directly to WGEA because not all definitions, classifications, and reporting categories aligned. Agencies continued to undertake validation, interpretation, and reconciliation activities to ensure reporting accuracy.

The challenges experienced through the APSC-WGEA mapping process for Commonwealth Public Sector reporting would likely be magnified if STP data were used for WGEA reporting. Unlike APSED, which contains workforce information collected for employment reporting purposes, STP is a payroll reporting dataset and does not align with many of the workforce, organisational, and governance data

elements collected by WGEA. As a result, extensive mapping, validation, and reconciliation activities would be required, with employers still needing to provide information directly to WGEA.

For these reasons, WGEA considers that digital solutions which extract information directly from employer HR and payroll systems are more likely to result in meaningful reduction in employer effort. Direct system integration would allow employers to report from the source systems used to manage workforce information, reducing the need to reconcile multiple datasets and supporting a more streamlined reporting experience.

WGEA's assessment is that it would not materially reduce employer reporting burden and is unlikely to provide a workable replacement for existing WGEA reporting requirements. A direct digital reporting solution developed with HR and payroll software providers represents a more effective pathway to reducing regulatory burden while maintaining data quality, transparency, and reporting integrity.