

BCA

Business Council of Australia

16 December 2024

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

By email: fpa.sen@aph.gov.au

To whom it may concern,

Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024

The Business Council of Australia (BCA) is pleased to make a submission to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee's (the Committee) inquiry into the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024 (the Bill).

The BCA supports the Bill which provides for the establishment of a gender equality targets scheme for employers with 500 or more employees. The BCA has previously supported general reporting on gender equity matters facilitated by the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). Establishing a formal gender target scheme for larger employers whilst providing flexibility for employers to select their targets is a valuable step forward to support greater workplace gender equality.

The BCA also welcomes the discretion provided to WGEA to consider the full circumstances of an employer's performance against targets when considering their compliance with the targets scheme (including corporate restructures, acquisition activity etc).

The BCA notes that detailed targets and related matters will be set out by a legislative instrument rather than in the primary legislation – the latter is the basis on which the BCA is making this submission. Without the material detail set out in draft legislative instruments it is difficult for the BCA to provide a complete view of the merits of the Bill and the wider gender equality target scheme.

Accordingly, and notwithstanding the BCA's position of support for the intent of the Bill, we request that the Committee recommend to Government that draft legislative instruments be made publicly available before the Bill is further debated. Doing so will ensure that affected companies and interested parties, including parliamentarians, have full information about the proposal before it is voted on in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,

Bran Black
Chief Executive
Business Council of Australia