

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry: Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024

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**Date:** 7 December 2024

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### Introduction:

I am submitting this document in response to the Parliamentary Inquiry into the Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024. This bill represents a significant step forward in promoting workplace gender equality across Australia. I commend its objectives and offer recommendations to enhance its implementation and effectiveness.

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### Support for the Bill:

1. **Accountability and Progress:**

The requirement for large employers to set measurable gender equality targets and report their progress will foster accountability and encourage tangible actions towards workplace diversity.

2. **Flexibility for Employers:**

Allowing employers to select targets relevant to their operations ensures the framework is adaptable across industries while maintaining a focus on meaningful outcomes.

3. **Alignment with Broader Goals:**

The bill supports Australia's commitment to gender equality and aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 5.

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### Recommendations:

1. **Enhanced Support for Implementation:**

To ease the transition, the government should provide resources such as templates, workshops, and tools to help employers set realistic targets and accurately report on progress.

2. **Clarification on "Reasonable Excuse":**

The bill should define what constitutes an acceptable "reasonable excuse" for non-compliance to ensure fairness and consistency in its enforcement.

3. **Streamlined Reporting for Smaller Subsidiaries:**

Subsidiaries with 100 or more employees, as included under the revised definitions, may find

compliance challenging. Simplified reporting options should be considered for these smaller entities.

4. **Robust Data Privacy Measures:**

Reporting on gender equality involves handling sensitive employee data. The bill must include clear guidelines to protect confidentiality and comply with existing privacy laws.

5. **Independent Evaluation:**

Establishing an independent body to monitor the impact of the legislation would ensure that it achieves its goals without imposing undue burdens on businesses.

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**Anticipated Challenges:**

1. **Stakeholder Resistance:**

Certain industry groups have expressed concerns about the bill's administrative requirements. Continued dialogue and collaboration with stakeholders will be essential to address these concerns effectively.

2. **Setting Realistic Targets:**

Employers may initially prioritise easier goals. Providing clear benchmarks and industry-specific examples will help ensure targets are ambitious yet achievable.

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**Conclusion:**

The Workplace Gender Equality Amendment (Setting Gender Equality Targets) Bill 2024 represents a bold and necessary step towards achieving gender equity in Australian workplaces. By addressing the outlined recommendations, the bill can enhance its effectiveness and gain broader support from stakeholders.

I welcome the opportunity to contribute further to this inquiry and am available to provide additional input if required.

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**Greg Peak**